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Memoirs of
Sir Walter Scott

BY

J. G. LOCKHART

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1822

In January 1822, Sir Walter had the great satisfaction of seeing Erskine at length promoted to a seat on the Bench of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kinnedder; and his pleasure was enhanced doubtless by the reflection that his friend owed this elevation very much, if not mainly, to his own unwearied exertions on his behalf. This happy event occurred just about the time when Joanna Baillie was distressed by hearing of the sudden and total ruin of an old friend of hers, a Scotch gentleman long distinguished in the commerce of the city of London; and she thought of collecting among her literary acquaintance such contributions as might, with some gleanings of her own portfolios, fill up a volume of poetical miscellanies, to be published, by subscription, for the benefit of the merchant's family. In requesting Sir Walter to write something for this purpose, she also asked him to communicate the scheme, in her name, to various common friends in the North—among others, to the new Judge. Scott's answer was—

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 10, 1822.

'MY DEAR FRIEND—No one has so good a title as you to command me in all my strength and in all my weakness. I do not believe I have a single scrap of unpublished poetry, for I was never a willing composer of occasional pieces, and when I have been guilty of such effusions, it was to answer the purpose of some publisher of songs, or the like immediate demand. The consequence is, that all these trifles have been long before the public, and whatever I add to your collection must have the grace of novelty, in case it should have no other. I do not know what should make it rather a melancholy task for me nowadays to sit down and versify—I did not use to think it so—but I have ceased, I know not why, to find pleasure in it, and yet I do not think I have lost any of the faculties I ever possessed for the task; but I was never fond of my own poetry, and am now much out of conceit with it. All this another person less candid in construction than yourself would interpret into a hint to send a good dose of praise—but you know we have agreed long ago to be above ordinances, like Cromwell's saints. When I go to the country upon the 12th of March, I will try what the water-side can do for me, for there is no inspiration in causeways and kennels, or even the Court of Session. You have the victory over me now, for I remember laughing at you for saying you could only write your beautiful lyrics upon a fine warm day. But what is this something to be? I wish you would give me a subject, for that would cut off half my difficulties.

'I am delighted with the prospect of seeing Miss Edgeworth, and making her personal acquaintance. I expect her to be just what you describe, a being totally void of affectation, and who, like one other lady of my acquaintance, carries her literary reputation as freely and easily as the milk-maid in my country does the *leglen*, which she carries on her head, and walks as gracefully with it as a duchess. Some of the fair sex, and some of the

foul sex, too, carry their renown in London fashion on a yoke and a pair of pitchers. The consequence is, that besides poking frightfully, they are hitting every one on the shins with their buckets. Now this is all nonsense—too fantastic to be written to anybody but a person of good sense. By the way, did you know Miss Austen, authoress of some novels which have a great deal of nature in them? —nature in ordinary and middle life, to be sure, but valuable from its strong resemblance and correct drawing. I wonder which way she carried her pail?[1]

[1] When the late collection of Sir Walter Scott's Prose Miscellanies was preparing, the publisher of the Quarterly Review led me into a mistake, which I may as well take this opportunity of apologizing for. Glancing hastily over his private records, he included in his list of Sir Walter's contributions to his journal an article on Miss Austen's novels, in No. xlviii. for January 1821; and as the opinions which the article expresses on their merits and defects harmonized with the usual tone of Scott's conversation, I saw no reason to doubt that he had drawn it up, although the style might have been considerably *doctored* by Mr. Gifford. I have since learned that the reviewal in question was in fact written by Dr. Whately, now Archbishop of Dublin; and that the article which Scott did contribute to the Quarterly on the novels of Miss Austen, was that which the reader will find in No. xxvii. *Emma* and *Northanger Abbey*, in particular, were great favourites of his, and he often read chapters of them to his evening circle. 'We bestow no mean compliment upon the author of Emma,' says Sir Walter, 'when we say, that keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners, and sentiments, greatly above our own. In this class she stands almost alone; for the scenes of Miss Edgeworth are laid in higher life, varied by more romantic incident, and by her remarkable power of embodying and illustrating national character. But the author of Emma confines herself chiefly to the middling classes of society; her most distinguished characters do not rise greatly above well-bred country gentlemen and ladies; and those which are sketched with most originality and precision, belong to a class rather below that standard. The narrative of all her novels is composed of such common occurrences as may have fallen under the observation of most folks; and her dramatis personæ conduct themselves upon the motives and principles which the readers may recognise as ruling their own and that of most of their acquaintances. The kind of moral, also, which these novels inculcate, applies equally to the paths of common life,' etc. etc.—Quarterly Review, *October* 1815.

'I did indeed rejoice at Erskine's promotion. There is a degree of melancholy attending the later stage of a barrister's profession, which, though no one cares for sentimentalities attendant on a man of fifty or thereabout, in a rusty black bombazine gown, are not the less cruelly felt; their business sooner or later fails, for younger men will work cheaper, and longer, and harder—besides that the cases are few, comparatively, in which senior counsel are engaged, and it is not etiquette to ask any one in that advanced age to take the whole burden of a cause. Insensibly, without decay of talent, and without losing the public esteem, there is a gradual decay of employment, which almost no man ever practised thirty years without experiencing; and thus the honours and dignities of the Bench, so hardly earned, and themselves leading but to toils of another kind, are peculiarly desirable. Erskine would have sat there ten years ago, but for wretched intrigues. He has a very poetical and elegant mind, but I do not know of any poetry of his writing, except some additional stanzas to Collins' ode on Scottish superstitions, long since published in the Border Minstrelsy. I doubt it would not be consistent with his high office to write poetry now, but you may add his name with Mrs. Scott's (Heaven forgive me! I should have said Lady Scott's) and mine to the subscription-list. I will not promise to get you more, for people always look as if you were asking the guinea for yourself—there John Bull has the better of Sawney; to be sure, he has more guineas to bestow, but we retain our reluctance to part with hard cash, though profuse enough in our hospitality. I have seen a laird, after giving us more champaign and claret than we cared to drink, look pale at the idea of paying a crown in charity.

'I am seriously tempted, though it would be sending coals to Newcastle with a vengeance, not to mention salt to Dysart, and all other superfluous importations—I am, I say, strangely tempted to write for your Protégés a dramatic scene on an incident which happened at the battle of Halidon Hill (I think). It was to me a nursery tale, often told by Mrs. Margaret Swinton, sister of my

maternal grandmother; a fine old lady of high blood, and of as high a mind, who was lineally descended from one of the actors. The anecdote was briefly thus. The family of Swinton is very ancient, and was once very powerful, and at the period of this battle the knight of Swinton was gigantic in stature, unequalled in strength, and a sage and experienced leader to boot. In one of those quarrels which divided the kingdom of Scotland in every corner, he had slain his neighbour, the head of the Gordon family, and an inveterate feud had ensued; for it seems that powerful as the Gordons always were, the Swintons could then bide a bang with them. Well, the battle of Halidon began, and the Scottish army, unskilfully disposed on the side of a hill where no arrow fell in vain, was dreadfully galled by the archery of the English, as usual; upon which Swinton approached the Scottish General, requesting command of a body of cavalry, and pledging his honour that he would, if so supported, charge and disperse the English archery—one of the manœuvres by which Bruce gained the battle of Bannockburn.—This was refused, out of stupidity or sullenness, by the General, on which Swinton expressed his determination to charge at the head of his own followers, though totally inadequate for the purpose. The young Gordon heard the proposal, son of him whom Swinton had slain, and with one of those irregular bursts of generosity and feeling which redeem the dark ages from the character of utter barbarism, he threw himself from his horse, and kneeled down before Swinton.—"I have not yet been knighted," he said, "and never can I take the honour from the hand of a truer, more loyal, more valiant leader, than he who slew my father: grant me," he said, "the boon I ask, and I unite my forces to yours, that we may live and die together." His feudal enemy became instantly his godfather in chivalry, and his ally in battle. Swinton knighted the young Gordon, and they rushed down at the head of their united retainers, dispersed the archery, and would have turned the battle, had they been supported. At length they both fell, and all who followed them were cut off; and it was remarked, that while the fight lasted,

the old giant guarded the young man's life more than his own, and the same was indicated by the manner in which his body lay stretched over that of Gordon. Now, do not laugh at my Berwickshire *burr*, which I assure you is literally and lineally handed down to me by my grandmother, from this fine old Goliah. Tell me, if I can clamper up the story into a sort of single scene, will it answer your purpose? I would rather try my hand in blank verse than rhyme.

'The story, with many others of the same kind, is consecrated to me by the remembrance of the narrator, with her brown silk gown, and triple ruffles, and her benevolent face, which was always beside our beds when there were childish complaints among us.[1] Poor Aunt Margaret had a most shocking fate, being murdered by a favourite maid-servant in a fit of insanity, when I was about ten years old; the catastrophe was much owing to the scrupulous delicacy and high courage of my poor relation, who would not have the assistance of men called in, for exposing the unhappy wretch her servant. I think you will not ask for a letter from me in a hurry again, but as I have no chance of seeing you for a long time, I must be contented with writing. My kindest respects attend Mrs. Agnes, your kind brother and family, and the Richardsons, little and big, short and tall; and believe me most truly yours, W. Scott.

'*P.S.*—Sophia is come up to her Sunday dinner, and begs to send a thousand remembrances, with the important intelligence that her baby actually says ma-ma, and bow wow, when he sees the dog. Moreover, he is christened John Hugh; and I intend to plant two little knolls at their cottage, to be called Mount Saint John, and Hugomont. The Papa also sends his respects.'

About this time Cornet Scott, being for a short period in Edinburgh, sat to William Allan for that

[1] See '*My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*,' Waverley Novels, vol. xli. pp. 295, etc. See also *ante*, vol. i. p. 86.

admirable portrait which now hangs (being the only picture in the room) over the mantelpiece of the Great Library at Abbotsford. Sir Walter, in extolling this performance to Lord Montagu, happened to mention that an engraving was about to appear from Mr. Allan's 'Death of Archbishop Sharp,' and requested his lordship to subscribe for a copy of it. Lord Montagu read his letter hurriedly, and thought the forthcoming engraving was of the Cornet and his charger. He signified that he would very gladly have *that;* but took occasion to remind Sir Walter that the Buccleuch family had not forgot his own old promise to sit to Raeburn for a portrait, to be hung up at Bowhill. Scott's letter of explanation includes his opinion of Horace Walpole's posthumous 'Memoirs.'

'*To the Lord Montagu.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *15th March* 1822.

'MY DEAR LORD—It is close firing to reply to your kind letter so soon, but I had led your Lordship into two mistakes, from writing my former letter in a hurry; and therefore to try whether I cannot contradict the old proverb of "two blacks not making a white," I write this in a hurry to mend former blunders.

'In the first place, I never dreamed of asking you to subscribe to a print of my son—it will be time for him to be *copperplated,* as Joseph Gillon used to call it, when he is major-general. I only meant to ask you to take a print of the Murder of Archbishop Sharp, and to mention historically that the same artist, who made a capital picture of that event, had painted for me a very good portrait of my son. I suppose I may apply your Lordship's kind permission to the work for which I *did* mean to require your patronage; and for a Scottish subject of interest by a Scottish artist of high promise, I will presume to reckon also on the patronage of my young chief. I had no idea of sitting for my own picture; and I think it will be as well to let

Duke Walter, when he feels his own ground in the world, take his own taste in the way of adorning his house. Two or three years will make him an adequate judge on such a subject, and if they will not make me more beautiful, they have every chance of making me more picturesque. The distinction was ably drawn in the case of parsons' horses, by Sydney Smith, in one of his lectures:—"The rector's horse is *beautiful*—the curate's is *picturesque*." If the portrait had been begun, that were another matter; as it is, the Duke, when he is two or three years older, shall command my picture, as the original, *à vendre et à pendre*—an admirable expression of devotion, which I picked up from a curious letter of Lord Lovat's, which I found the other day. I am greatly afraid the said original will by and by be fit only for the last branch of the dilemma.

'Have you read Lord Orford's History of his own Time—it is acid and lively, but serves, I think, to show how little those who live in public business, and of course in constant agitation and intrigue, know about the real and deep progress of opinions and events. The Memoirs of our Scots Sir George Mackenzie are of the same class —both, immersed in little political detail, and the struggling skirmish of party, seem to have lost sight of the great progressive movements of human affairs. They put me somewhat in mind of a miller, who is so busy with the clatter of his own wheels, grindstones, and machinery, and so much employed in regulating his own artificial mill-dam, that he is incapable of noticing the gradual swell of the river from which he derives his little stream, until it comes down in such force as to carry his whole manufactory away before it. It is comical, too, that Lord Orford should have delayed trusting the public with his reminiscences, until so many years had destroyed all our interest in the Parliamentary and Court intrigues which he tells with so much vivacity. It is like a man who should brick up a hogshead of cyder, to be drunk half a century afterwards, when it could contain little but acidity and vapidity.

'I am here, thank God, for two months. I have acquired, as I trust, a good gardener, warranted by Macdonald of Dalkeith. So the seeds, which your Lordship is so kind as to promise me, will be managed like a tansy. The greatest advance of age which I have yet found is liking a *cat*, an animal I detested, and becoming fond of a garden, an art which I despised—but I suppose the indulgent mother Nature has pets and hobby-horses suited to her children at all ages.—Ever, my dear Lord, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

Acquiescing in the propriety of what Sir Walter had thus said respecting the proposed portrait for Bowhill, Lord Montagu requested him to sit without delay for a smaller picture on his own behalf; and the result was that half-length now at Ditton, which possesses a peculiar value and interest as being the very last work of Raeburn's pencil. The poet's answer to Lord Montagu's request was as follows:—

'*To the Lord Montagu.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *27th March* 1822.

'MY DEAR LORD—I should be very unworthy of so great a proof of your regard, did I not immediately assure you of the pleasure with which I will contribute the head you wish to the halls of Ditton. I know no place where the substance has been so happy, and, therefore, the shadow may be so far well placed. I will not suffer this important affair to languish so far as I am concerned, but will arrange with Raeburn when I return to Edinburgh in May. Allan is not in the ordinary habit of doing portraits, and as he is really a rising historical painter, I should be sorry to see him seduced into the lucrative branch which carries off most artists of that description. If he goes on as he has begun, the young Duke may one day patronise the Scottish Arts, so far as to order a picture of the "Releasing" of

Kinmont Willie[1] from him. I agree entirely with your Lordship's idea of leaving the young chief to have the grace of forming his own ideas on many points, contenting yourself with giving him such principles as may enable him to judge rightly. I believe more youths of high expectation have bolted from the course, merely because well-meaning friends had taken too much care to *rope it in*, than from any other reason whatever. There is in youth a feeling of independence, a desire, in short, of being their own master, and enjoying their own free agency, which is not always attended to by guardians and parents, and hence the best laid schemes fail in execution from being a little too prominently brought forward. I trust that Walter, with the good sense which he seems to possess, will never lose that most amiable characteristic of his father's family, the love and affection which all the members of it have, for two generations, borne to each other, and which has made them patterns as well as blessings to the country they lived in. I have few happier days to look forward to (and yet, like all happiness which comes to grey-headed men, it will have a touch of sorrow in it), than that in which he shall assume his high situation with the resolution which I am sure he will have to be a good friend to the country in which he has so large a stake, and to the multitudes which must depend upon him for protection, countenance, and bread. Selfish feelings are so much the fashion among fashionable men—it is accounted so completely absurd to do anything which is not to contribute more or less directly to the immediate personal *éclat* or personal enjoyment of the party—that young men lose sight of real power and real importance, the foundation of which must be laid, even selfishly considered, in contributing to the general welfare,—like those who have thrown their bread on the waters, expecting, and surely receiving, after many days, its

[1] See, in the Border Minstrelsy (vol. ii. p. 32), the capital old ballad on this dashing exploit of 'the Bold Buccleuch' of Queen Elizabeth's time.

return in gratitude, attachment, and support of every kind. The memory of the most splendid entertainment passes away with the season, but the money and pains bestowed upon a large estate not only contribute to its improvement, but root the bestower in the hearts of hundreds over hundreds; should these become needful, he is sure to exercise a correspondent influence. I cannot look forward to these as settled times. In the retrenchments proposed, Government agree to diminish their own influence, and while they contribute a comparative trifle to the relief of the public burdens, are making new discontents among those who, for interest's sake at least, were their natural adherents. In this they are acting weakly, and trying to soothe the insatiate appetite of innovation, by throwing down their outworks, as if that which renders attack more secure and easy would diminish the courage of the assailants. Last year the manufacturing classes were rising—this year the agricultural interest is discontented, and whatever temporary relief either class receives will indeed render them quiet for the moment, but not erase from their minds the rooted belief that the government and constitution of this country are in fault for their embarrassments. Well, I cannot help it, and therefore will not think about it, for that at least I *can* help.

Time and the hour run through the roughest day.[1]

'We have had dreadful tempests here of wind and rain, and for a variety a little snow. I assure you it is as uncommon to see a hill with snow on its top these two last seasons as to see a beau on the better side of thirty with powder in his hair. I built an ice-house last year, and could get no ice to fill it—this year I took the opportunity of even poor twenty-four hours, and packed it full of hard-rammed snow—but lo ye—the snow is now *in meditatione fugæ*, and I wish I may have enough to cool a decanter when you come to Abbotsford, as I trust your Lordship will be likely to be here next autumn. It is worth while to come, were it but to see what a romance

[1] Macbeth, Act I. Scene 3.

of a house I am making, which is neither to be castle nor abbey (God forbid !) but an old Scottish manor-house. I believe Atkinson is in despair with my whims, for he cries out *yes—yes—yes*, in a tone which exactly signifies *no—no—no, by no manner of means*.—Believe me always, my dear Lord, most gratefully yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

At the commencement of this spring, then, Scott found his new edifice in rapid progress; and letters on that subject to and from Terry occupy, during many subsequent months, a very large share in his correspondence. Before the end of the vacation, however, he had finished the MS. of his Nigel. Nor had he lost sight of his promise to Joanna Baillie. He produced, and that, as I well remember, in the course of two rainy mornings, the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but on concluding it, he found that he had given it an extent quite incompatible with his friend's arrangements for her charitable picnic. He therefore cast about for another subject likely to be embraced in smaller compass; and the Blair-Adam meeting of the next June supplied him with one in Macduff's Cross. Meantime, on hearing a whisper about Halidon Hill, Messrs. Constable, without seeing the MS., forthwith tendered £1000 for the copyright—the same sum that had appeared almost irrationally munificent, when offered in 1807 for the embryo Marmion. It was accepted, and a letter from Constable himself, about to be introduced, will show how well the head of the firm was pleased with this wild bargain. At the moment when his head was giddy with the popular applauses of the new-launched Nigel—and although he had been informed that Peveril of the Peak was already on the stocks—he suggested that a little pinnace, of the Halidon class, might easily be rigged out once a quarter, by way of diversion, and thus add another £4000 per annum to the £10,000 or £15,000 on which all parties counted as the sure yearly profit of the three-deckers *in fore*.

Before I quote Constable's effusion, however, I must

recall to the reader's recollection some very gratifying, but I am sure perfectly sincere, laudation of him in his professional capacity, which the Author of The Fortunes of Nigel had put into the mouth of his Captain Clutterbuck in the humorous Epistle Introductory to that Novel. After alluding, in affectionate terms, to the recent death of John Ballantyne, the Captain adds,—'To this great deprivation has been added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend, whose vigorous intellect, and liberal ideas, have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect, even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes, operated in a great measure by the strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhoped-for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present. I entered the shop at the Cross to enquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder.'

It appears that Nigel was published on the 30th of May 1822; and next day Constable writes as follows from his temporary residence near London :—

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Castle Street, Edinburgh.*

'CASTLEBEARE PARK, *31st May* 1822.

'DEAR SIR WALTER—I have received the highest gratification from the perusal of a certain new work. I may indeed say new work, for it is entirely so, and will, if that be possible, eclipse in popularity all that has gone before it.

'The Author will be blamed for one thing, however unreasonably, and that is, for concluding the story without giving his readers a little more of it. We are a set of ungrateful mortals. For one thing at least I trust I am

never to be found so, for I must ever most duly appreciate the kind things intended to be applied to me in the Introductory Epistle to this work. I learn with astonishment, but not less delight, that the press is at work again; the title, which has been handed to me, is quite excellent.

'I am now so well as to find it compatible to pay my respects to some of my old haunts in the metropolis, where I go occasionally. I was in town yesterday, and so keenly were the people devouring my friend *Jingling Geordie*, that I actually saw them reading it in the streets as they passed along. I assure you there is no exaggeration in this. A new novel from the author of Waverley puts aside—in other words, puts down for the time, every other literary performance. The smack Ocean, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at the wharf on Sunday; the bales were got out by *one* on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock 7000 copies had been dispersed from 90 Cheapside.[1] I sent my secretary on purpose to witness the activity with which such things are conducted, and to bring me the account, gratifying certainly, which I now give you.

'I went yesterday to the shop of a curious person—Mr. Swaby, in Wardour Street—to look at an old portrait which my son, when lately here, mentioned to me. It is, I think, a portrait of *James the Fourth*, and if not an original, is doubtless a picture as early as his reign. Our friend Mr. Thomson has seen it, and is of the same opinion; but I purpose that you should be called upon to decide this nice point, and I have ordered it to be forwarded to you, trusting that ere long I may see it in the Armoury at Abbotsford.

'I found at the same place two large elbow-chairs, elaborately carved, in boxwood—with figures, foliage, etc., perfectly entire. Mr. Swaby, from whom I purchased them, assured me they came from the Borghese Palace at Rome; he possessed originally ten such chairs, and had sold six of them to the Duke of Rutland, for Belvoir

[1] Constable's London agents, Messrs. Hurst, Robinson, and Co., had then their premises in Cheapside.

Castle, where they will be appropriate furniture; the two which I have obtained would, I think, not be less so in the Library of Abbotsford.

'I have been so fortunate as to secure a still more curious article—a slab of mosaic pavement, quite entire and large enough to make an outer hearthstone, which I also destine for Abbotsford. It occurred to me that these three articles might prove suitable to your taste, and under that impression I am now induced to take the liberty of requesting you to accept them as a small but sincere pledge of grateful feeling. Our literary connexion is too important to make it necessary for your publishers to trouble you about the pounds, shillings, and pence of such things; and I therefore trust you will receive them on the footing I have thus taken the liberty to name. I have been on the outlook for antique carvings, and if I knew the purposes for which you would want such, I might probably be able to send you some.

'I was truly happy to hear of "Halidon Hill," and of the satisfactory arrangements made for its publication. I wish I had the power of prevailing with you to give us a similar production every three months; and that our ancient enemies on this side the Border might not have too much their own way, perhaps your next dramatic sketch might be Bannockburn.[1] It would be presumptuous in me to point out subjects, but you know my craving to be great, and I cannot resist mentioning here that I should like to see a Battle of Hastings—a Cressy—a Bosworth Field—and many more.

'Sir Thomas Lawrence was so kind as invite me to see his pictures,—what an admirable portrait he has commenced of you!—he has altogether hit a happy and interesting expression. I do not know whether you have heard that there is an exhibition at Leeds this year. I had an application for the use of Raeburn's picture, which is now there; and it stands No. 1 in the catalogue, of which I inclose you a copy.

'You will receive with this a copy of the "Poetry,

[1] Had Mr. Constable quite forgotten the Lord of the Isles?

original and selected." I have, I fear, overshot the mark by including the poetry of The Pirate, a liberty for which I must hope to be forgiven. The publication of the volume will be delayed ten days, in case you should do me the favour to suggest any alteration in the advertisement, or other change.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir Walter, your faithful humble servant,

'ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE.'

The last paragraph of this letter alludes to a little volume, into which Constable had collected the songs, mottoes, and other scraps of verse scattered over Scott's Novels, from Waverley to The Pirate. It had a considerable run; and had it appeared sooner, might have saved Mr. Adolphus the trouble of writing an essay to prove that the Author of Waverley, whoever he might be, was a Poet.

Constable, during his residence in England at this time, was in the habit of writing every week or two to Sir Walter, and his letters now before me are all of the same complexion as the preceding specimen. The ardent bookseller's brain seems to have been well-nigh unsettled at this period; and I have often thought that the foxglove which he then swallowed (his complaint being a threatening of water in the chest) might have had a share in the extravagant excitement of his mind. Occasionally, however, he enters on details as to which, or at least as to Sir Walter's share in them, there could not have been any mistake; and these were, it must be owned, of a nature well calculated to nourish and sustain in the author's fancy a degree of almost mad exhilaration, near akin to his publisher's own predominant mood. In a letter of the ensuing month, for example, after returning to the progress of Peveril of the Peak, under 10,000 copies of which (or nearly that number) Ballantyne's presses were now groaning, and glancing gaily to the prospect of their being kept regularly employed to the same extent until three other novels, as yet unchristened, had followed Peveril, he adds a summary of what was then, had just

been, or was about to be, the amount of occupation furnished to the same office by reprints of older works of the same pen;—'a summary,' he exclaims, 'to which I venture to say there will be no rival in our day!' And well might Constable say so; for the result is, that James Ballantyne and Co. had just executed, or were on the eve of executing, by his order—

'A new edition of Sir W. Scott's Poetical Works, in 10 vols. (miniature) .	5000 copies.
'Novels and Tales, 12 vols. ditto .	5000 ,,
'Historical Romances, 6 vols. ditto .	5000 ,,
'Poetry from Waverley, etc., 1 vol. 12mo	5000 ,,
'Paper required	7772 reams.
'Volumes produced from Ballantyne's press	145,000!'

To which we may safely add from 30,000 to 40,000 volumes more as the immediate produce of the author's daily industry within the space of twelve months. The scale of these operations was, without question, enough to turn any bookseller's wits;—Constable's, in its soberest hours, was as inflammable a headpiece as ever sat on the shoulders of a poet; and his ambition, in truth, had been moving *pari passu*, during several of these last stirring and turmoiling years, with that of *his* poet. He, too, as I ought to have mentioned ere now, had, like a true Scotchman, concentrated his dreams on the hope of bequeathing to his heir the name and dignity of a lord of acres. He, too, had considerably before this time purchased a landed estate in his native county of Fife; he, too, I doubt not, had, while Abbotsford was rising, his own rural castle *in petto*; and alas! for 'Archibald Constable of Balniel' also, and his overweening intoxication of worldly success, Fortune had already begun to prepare a stern rebuke.

Nigel was, I need not say, considered as ranking in the first class of Scott's romances. Indeed, as a historical portraiture, his of James I. stands forth pre-eminent, and

almost alone; nor, perhaps, in re-perusing these novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression as the picture of an age. It is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.

The novel was followed in June by the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but that had far inferior success. I shall say a word on it presently, in connexion with another piece of the same order.

A few weeks before this time, Cornet Scott had sailed for Germany, and, it seems, in the midst of rough weather—his immediate destination being Berlin, where his father's valued friend Sir George Rose was then Ambassador from the Court of St. James's:—

'*For Walter Scott, Esq.*

(*Care of His Excellency Sir George Rose, etc. etc., Berlin.*)

'MY DEAR WALTER—Your letters came both together this morning, and relieved me from a disagreeable state of anxiety about you, for the winds have been tremendous since you sailed; and no news arriving from the Continent, owing to their sticking in the west, I was really very uneasy. Luckily mamma did not take any alarm. I have no news to send you, save what are agreeable. We are well here, and going on in the old fashion. Last night Mathews the comedian was with us, and made himself very entertaining. About a week ago the Comtesse Nial, a lady in the service of Princess Louisa of Prussia, came to dine here with the Lord Chief Commissioner and family, and seemed to take a great interest in what she heard and saw of our Scottish fashions. She was so good as to offer me letters for you to the Princess Louisa;

General Gneissenau, who was Adjutant-General of Blucher's army, and formed the plan of almost all the veteran's campaigns; and to the Baroness de la Motte Fouqué, who is distinguished in the world of letters, as well as her husband the Baron, the author of many very pleasing works of fiction, particularly the beautiful tale of Undine, and the travels of Theodulph. If you find an opportunity to say to the Baroness how much I have been interested by her writings and Mons. de la Motte Fouqué's, you will say no more than the truth, and it will be civil, for folks like to know that they are known and respected beyond the limits of their own country.

'Having the advantage of good introductions to foreigners of distinction, I hope you will not follow the established English fashion of herding with your countrymen, and neglecting the opportunity of extending your acquaintance with the language and society. There is, I own, a great temptation to this in a strange country; but it is destruction of all the purposes for which the expense and trouble of foreign travel are incurred. Labour particularly at the German, as the French can be acquired elsewhere; but I should rather say, work hard at both. It is not, I think, likely, though it is possible, that you may fall into company with some of the *Têtes échauffées*, who are now so common in Germany—men that would pull down the whole political system in order to rebuild it on a better model: a proposal about as wild as that of a man who should propose to change the bridle of a furious horse, and commence his labours by slipping the headstall in the midst of a heath. Prudence, as well as principle and my earnest desire, will induce you to avoid this class of politicians, who, I know, are always on the alert to kidnap young men.

'I account Sir George Rose's being at Berlin the most fortunate circumstance which could have befallen you, as you will always have a friend whom you can consult in case of need. Do not omit immediately arranging your time so as to secure as much as possible for your studies and exercises. For the last I recommend fencing and riding in

the academy; for though a good horseman, it is right you should keep up the habit, and many of the German schools are excellent. I think, however, Sir George Rose says that of Berlin is but indifferent; and he is a good judge of the art. I pray you not to lose time in dawdling; for, betwixt Edinburgh, London, and the passage, much of the time which our plan destined for your studies has been consumed, and your return into the active service of your profession is proportionally delayed; so lose no time. I cannot say but what I am very happy that you are not engaged in the inglorious, yet dangerous and harassing, warfare of Ireland at present. Your old friend Paddy is now stark mad, and doing much mischief. Sixteen of the Peelers have, I see by this morning's papers, been besieged in their quarters by the mob, four killed, and the rest obliged to surrender after they had fired the house in which they were quartered. The officers write that the service is more harassing than on the Peninsula, and it would appear a considerable part of the country is literally in possession of the insurgents. You are just as well learning *Teütsche sprechen*. I am glad to see you are writing a firm and good hand. Your last from Hamburgh was distinctly written, and well composed. Pray write all your remarks, and pay some little attention to the style, which, without being stiff or pedantic, should always be accurate.

'The Lockharts are well; but baby has a cough, which keeps Sophia anxious; they cannot say whether it be the hooping-cough or no. Mamma, Anne, and little Walter[1] send kind love. The little fellow studies hard, and will, I hope, be a credit to the name he bears. If you do not take care, he may be a General before you. —Always, my dear Walter, most affectionately yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—The Germans are a people of form. You will take care to learn the proper etiquette about delivering the enclosed letters.'

[1] Walter, the son of Mr. Thomas Scott, was at this time domiciled with his uncle's family.

CHAPTER LVI

Repairs of Melrose Abbey—Letters to Lord Montagu and Miss Edgeworth—King George IV. visits Scotland—Celtic mania—Mr. Crabbe in Castle Street—Death of Lord Kinnedder—Departure of the King—Letters from Mr. Peel and Mr. Croker.

1822

About this time Scott's thoughts were much occupied with a plan for securing Melrose Abbey against the progress of decay, which had been making itself manifest to an alarming extent, and to which he had often before directed the attention of the Buccleuch family. Even in writing to persons who had never seen Melrose, he could not help touching on this business—for he wrote, as he spoke, out of the fulness of the heart. The young Duke readily concurred with his guardians in allowing the poet to direct such repairs as might seem to him adequate; and the result was extremely satisfactory to all the habitual worshippers of these classical ruins.

I return to the copious and candid correspondence from which it has been throughout my object to extract and combine the scattered fragments of an *autobiography*.

'*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.*

'Abbotsford, *24th April* 1822.

'My dear Miss Edgeworth — I am extremely sorry indeed that you cannot fulfil your kind intentions

to be at Abbotsford this year. It is a great disappointment, and I am grieved to think it should have arisen from the loss of a valued relation. That is the worst part of life, when its earlier path is trod. If my limbs get stiff, my walks are made shorter and my rides slower —if my eyes fail me, I can use glasses and a large print— if I get a little deaf, I comfort myself that, except in a few instances, I shall be no great loser by missing one full half of what is spoken; but I feel the loneliness of age when my companions and friends are taken from me. The sudden death of both the Boswells, and the bloody end of the last, have given me great pain.[1] You have never got half the praise *Vivian* ought to have procured you. The reason is, that the class from which the excellent portrait was drawn, feel the resemblance too painfully to thank the author for it; and I do not believe the common readers understand it in the least. I, who (thank God) am neither great man nor politician, have lived enough among them to recognise the truth and nature of the painting, and am no way implicated in the satire. I begin to think, that of the three kingdoms the English alone are qualified to mix in politics safely and without fatal results; the fierce and hasty resentments of the Irish, and the sullen, long-enduring, revengeful temper of my countrymen, make such agitations have a much wider and more dreadful effect amongst them. Well, we will forget what

[1] James Boswell of the Temple, editor of the last Variorum Shakespeare, etc., a man of considerable learning and admirable social qualities, died suddenly, in the prime of life, about a fortnight before his brother Sir Alexander. Scott was warmly attached to them both, and the fall of the Baronet might well give him a severe shock, for he had dined in Castle Street only two or three days before it occurred, and the merriest tones of his voice were still ringing in his friend's ears when he received the fatal intelligence. That evening was, I think, the gayest I ever spent in Castle Street; and though Charles Mathews was present, and in his best force, poor Boswell's songs, jokes, and anecdotes had exhibited no symptom of eclipse. It turned out that he had joined the party whom he thus delighted, immediately after completing the last arrangements for his duel. It may be worth while to add, that several circumstances of his death are *exactly* reproduced in the duel scene of St. Ronan's Well.

we cannot help, and pray that we may lose no more friends till we find, as I hope and am sure we shall do, friends in each other. I had arranged to stay at least a month after the 12th of May, in hopes of detaining you at Abbotsford, and I will not let you off under a month or two the next year. I shall have my house completed, my library replaced, my armoury new furbished, my piper new clothed, and the time shall be July. I trust I may have the same family about me, and perhaps my two sons. Walter is at Berlin studying the great art of war—and entertaining a most military conviction that all the disturbances of Ireland are exclusively owing to his last regiment, the 18th Hussars, having been imprudently reduced. Little Charles is striving to become a good scholar, and fit for Oxford. Both have a chance of being at home in autumn 1823. I know nothing I should wish you to see which has any particular chance of becoming invisible in the course of fourteen months, excepting my old bloodhound, poor fellow, on whom age now sits so heavily that he cannot follow me far from the house. I wished you to see him very much—he is of that noble breed which Ireland, as well as Scotland, once possessed, and which is now almost extinct in both countries. I have sometimes thought of the final cause of dogs having such short lives, and I am quite satisfied it is in compassion to the human race; for if we suffer so much in losing a dog after an acquaintance of ten or twelve years, what would it be if they were to live double that time?

'I don't propose being in London this year—I do not like it—there is such a riding and driving—so much to see—so much to say—not to mention plover's eggs and champaign—that I always feel too much excited in London,—though it is good to rub off the rust too, sometimes, and brings you up abreast with the world as it goes——But I must break off, being summoned to a conclave to examine how the progress of decay, which at present threatens to destroy the ruins of Melrose, can yet be arrested. The Duke of Buccleuch, though but a boy, is very desirous to have something done, and his guardians

have acquiesced in a wish so reasonable and creditable to the little chief. I only hope they will be liberal, for a trifle will do no good—or rather, I think, any partial tampering is likely to do harm. But the Duke has an immense estate, and I hope they will remember, that though a moderate sum may keep up this national monument, yet his whole income could not replace it should it fall.—Yours, dear Miss Edgeworth, with true respect and regard, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To the Lord Montagu, etc.*

'ABBOTSFORD, 29*th April* 1822.

'MY DEAR LORD—The state of the east window is peculiarly precarious, and it may soon give way if not assisted. There would not only be dishonour in that, as Trinculo says when he lost his bottle in the pool,[1] but an infinite loss. Messrs. Smallwood and Smith concur, there will be no difficulty in erecting a scaffolding strong enough to support the weight of an interior arch, or *beam*, as we call it, of wood, so as to admit the exterior two rows of the stone-arch to be lifted and replaced, stone by stone, and made as sure as ever they were. The other ribs should then be pointed both above and beneath, every fissure closed, every tree and shrub eradicated, and the whole arch covered with Roman cement, or, what would be greatly better, with lead. This operation relates to the vault over the window. Smallwood thinks that the window itself, that is, the shafted columns, should be secured by renewing the cross-irons which formerly combined them together laterally, and the holes of which still remain; and, indeed, considering how it has kept its ground in its present defenceless state, I think it amounts to a certainty that the restoration of so many *points d'appui* will secure it against any tempest whatsoever, especially when the vaulted roof is preserved from the present risk of falling down on it.

'There is one way in which the expense would be

[1] Tempest, Act IV. Scene 1.

greatly lessened, and the appearance of the building in the highest degree improved, but it depends on a *proviso*. Provided, then, that the whole eastern window, with the vaults above it, were repaired and made, as Law says, *sartum atque tectum*, there could be no objection to taking down the modern roof with the clumsy buttresses on the northern side.[1] Indeed I do not see how the roof's continuing could in any respect protect the window, though it may be very doubtful whether the west gable should be pulled down, which would expose the east window to a thorough draught of air, a circumstance which the original builder did not contemplate, and against which, therefore, he made no provision. The taking down this roof and the beastly buttresses would expose a noble range of columns on each side.—Ever, my dear Lord, yours ever truly, W. S.'

'*To the Same.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *15th May* 1822.

'MY DEAR LORD—I am quite delighted with the commencement of the Melrose repairs, and hope to report progress before I leave the country, though that must be on Monday next. Please God, I will be on the roof of the old Abbey myself when the scaffolding is up. When I was a boy I could climb like a wild-cat; and entire affection to the work on hand must on this occasion counterbalance the disadvantages of increased weight and stiffened limbs. The east and south window certainly claim the preference in any repairs suggested; the side aisles are also in a very bad way, but cannot in this summer weather be the worse of delay. It is the rain that finds its way betwixt the arch-stones in winter, and is there arrested by the frost, which ruins ancient buildings when exposed to wet. Ice occupies more space than water unfrozen, and thus, when formed, operates as so

[1] Some time after the disciples of John Knox had done their savage pleasure upon Melrose Abbey, the western part of the chancel was repaired in a most clumsy style to serve as a parish kirk.

many wedges inserted between the stones of the arch, which, of course, are dislocated by this interposition, and in process of time the equilibrium of the arch is destroyed —Q.E.D. There spoke the President of the R.S.E. The removal of the old roof would not be attended with a penny of expense — nay, might be a saving, were it thought proper to replace the flags which now cover it upon the side aisles, where they certainly originally lay. The rubble-stones would do much more than pay the labourers. But though this be the case, and though the beauty of the ruin would be greatly increased, still I should first like to be well assured that the east window was not thereby deprived of shelter. It is to be seriously weighed that the architect, who has shown so much skill, would not fail to modify the strength of the different parts of his building to the violence which they were to sustain; and as it never entered into his pious pate that the east window was to be exposed to a thorough blast from west to east, it is possible he may not have constructed it of strength sufficient to withstand its fury; and therefore I say caution, caution.

'We are not like to suffer on this occasion the mortification incurred by my old friend and kinsman Mr. Keith of Ravelstone, a most excellent man, but the most irresolute in the world, more especially when the question was unloosing his purse-strings. Conceiving himself to represent the great Earls-Marischal, and being certainly possessed of their castle and domains, he bethought him of the family vault, a curious Gothic building in the churchyard of Dunnottar: £10, it was reported, would do the job—my good friend proffered £5—it would not do. Two years after he offered the full sum. A report was sent that the breaches were now so much increased that £20 would scarce serve. Mr. Keith humm'd and ha'd for three years more; then offered £20. The wind and rain had not waited his decision—less than £50 would not now serve. A year afterwards he sent a cheque for the £50, which was returned by post, with the pleasing intelligence that the Earl-Marischal's aisle had fallen the

preceding week. Your Lordship's prompt decision has probably saved Melrose Abbey from the same fate. I protest I often thought I was looking on it for the last time.

'I do not know how I could write in such a slovenly way as to lead your Lordship to think that I could recommend planting even the fertile soil of Bowden-moor in the month of April or May. Except evergreens, I would never transplant a tree betwixt March and Martinmas. Indeed I hold by the old proverb—plant a tree before Candlemas, and *command* it to grow—plant it after Candlemas, and you must *entreat* it. I only spoke of this as a thing which you might look at when your Lordship came here; and so your ideas exactly meet mine.

'I think I can read Lady Montagu's dream, or your Lordship's, or my own, or our common vision, without a Daniel coming to judgment, for I bethink me my promise related to some Botany Bay seeds, etc., sent me in gratitude by an honest gentleman who had once run some risk of being himself pendulous on a tree in this country. If they come to anything pretty, we shall be too proud to have some of the produce at Ditton.

'Your hailstones have visited us—mingled, in Scripture phrase, with coals of fire. My uncle, now ninety-three years complete, lives in the house of Monklaw, where the offices were set on fire by the lightning. The old gentleman was on foot, and as active with his orders and directions as if he had been but forty-five. They wished to get him off, but he answered, "Na, na, lads, I have faced mony a fire in my time, and I winna turn my back on this ane." Was not this a good cut of an old Borderer?—Ever your Lordship's faithful

'W. Scott.'

In the next of these letters Sir Walter refers to the sudden death of the excellent Primate of Ireland, the Honourable William Stuart, brother to his and Lord Montagu's dear friend Lady Louisa. His Grace appears to have been cut off in consequence of an overdose of laudanum being accidentally administered to him.

'*To the Same.*

'EDINBURGH, *24th May* 1822.

'I do devoutly grieve for poor Lady Louisa. With a mind, and indeed a bodily frame, which suffers so peculiarly as hers under domestic affliction, I think she has had a larger share of it than any person almost in my acquaintance. Perhaps, in her case, celibacy, by extending the affections of so kind a heart through the remoter range of relationship, has rendered her more liable to such inroads upon her happiness. I remember several accidents similar to that of the Archbishop of Armagh. Henderson's (the player) was one. His wife, who administered the fatal draught, was the only person who remained ignorant of the cause of his death. One of the Duke's farmers, some years since, showed extraordinary resolution in the same situation. His father had given him a quantity of laudanum instead of some other medicine. The mistake was instantly discovered; but the young man had sufficient energy and force of mind to combat the operation of the drug. While all around him were stupid with fear, he rose, saddled his horse, and rode to Selkirk (six or seven miles); thus saving the time that the doctor must have taken in coming to him. It is very curious that his agony of mind was able to suspend the operation of the drug until he had alighted, when it instantly began to operate. He recovered perfectly.

'Much obliged by the communication of the symbols adopted by the lady patronesses at the ball for the Scottish Corporation. Some seem very apocryphal. I have somewhere two lists of the badges of the Highland clans, which do not quite correspond with each other. I suppose they sometimes shifted their symbols. In general, it was a rule to have an evergreen; and I have heard that the downfall of the Stuarts was supposed to be omened by their having chosen the oak for their badge of distinction. I have always heard that of the Scotts was the heath-flower, and that they were sometimes called *Heather-tops* from the

circumstance. There is a rhyme in Satchells or elsewhere, which runs thus :—

> If heather-bells were corn of the best,
> Buccleuch-mill would have a noble grist.

In the Highlands I used sometimes to put heath in my hat, and was always welcomed as a kinsman by the Macdonalds, whose badge is *freugh*, or heather. By the way, Glengarry has had an affair with a cow, in which, rumour says, he has not come off quite so triumphantly as Guy of Warwick in an incident of the same nature. Lord pity them that should mention Tom Thumb.—
Yours ever, W. S.'

In the following he touches, among other things, on a strange book, called *Cranbourne Chase*,[1] the performance of a clergyman mad upon sport, which had been sent to him by his friend William Rose ;—the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, as celebrated by him and his rural allies at Melrose ;—a fire which had devastated the New Forest, in the neighbourhood of Lord Montagu's seat of Beaulieu Abbey ;—and the annual visit to Blair-Adam, which suggested the subject of another dramatic sketch, that of *Macduff's Cross.*

'*To the Same.*

'EDINBURGH, *June* 23, 1822.

'I am glad your Lordship likes Cranbourne Chase : if you had not, I should have been mortified in my self-conceit, for I thought you were exactly the person to relish it. If you bind it, pray insert at the beginning or end two or three leaves of blank paper, that I may insert some excellent anecdotes of the learned author, which I got

[1] 'Anecdotes of Cranbourne Chase, etc., by William Chafin, clerk : 2nd edition. Nichols, London 1818,'—a thin 8vo. Our Sporting Library, a rich and curious one, does not include anything more entertaining than Mr. Chafin's little volume : and I am sorry Sir Walter never redeemed his promise to make it the subject of an article in the Quarterly Review.

from good authority. His *début* in the sporting line was shooting an old cat, for which crime his father made him do penance upon bread and water for three months in a garret, where he amused himself with hunting rats upon a new principle. Is not this being game to the backbone?

'I expect to be at Abbotsford for two days about the 18th, that I may hold a little jollification with the inhabitants of Melrose and neighbourhood, who always have a gaudeamus, like honest men, on the anniversary of Waterloo. I shall then see what is doing at the Abbey. I am very tenaciously disposed to think, that when the expense of scaffolding, etc. is incurred, it would be very desirable to complete the thing by covering the arch with lead, which will secure it for 500 years. I doubt compositions standing our evil climate; and then the old story of vegetation taking place among the stones comes round again, and twenty years put it in as much danger as before. To be sure, the lead will not look so picturesque as cement, but then the preservation will be complete and effectual.

'The fire in Bewly forest reminds me of a pine wood in Strathspey taking fire, which threatened the most destructive consequences to the extensive forests of the Laird of Grant. He sent the *fiery cross* (then peculiarly appropriate, and the last time, it is said, that it was used) through Glen-Urquhart and all its dependencies, and assembled five hundred Highlanders with axes, who could only stop the conflagration by cutting a gap of 500 yards in width betwixt the burning wood and the rest of the forest. This occurred about 1770, and must have been a most tremendous scene.

'Adam Fergusson and I spent Saturday, Sunday, and Monday last, in scouring the country with the Chief Baron and Chief Commissioner in search of old castles, crosses, and so forth; and the pleasant weather rendered the excursion delightful. The beasts of Reformers have left only the bottom-stone or socket of Macduff's Cross, on which is supposed to have been recorded the bounty of King Malcolm Canmore to the unborn Thane of Fife.

It was a comfort, however, to have seen anything of it at all. As to your being in Bond Street, I can only say I pity you with all my heart. Castle Street is bad enough, even with the privilege of a hop-step-and-jump to Abbotsford, by way of shoemakers' holiday.

'I shall be delighted to hear that Lady Charlotte's bridal has taken place;[1] and as doubtless she destines a pair of gloves to one of her oldest friends and well-wishers, I hope her Ladyship will not allow the awful prospect before her to put out of her recollection that I have the largest pair of hands almost in Scotland (now that Hugh Warrender is gone), and that if there be seven-leagued gloves, as once there were seven-leagued boots, they will be most "germain to the matter." My respectful compliments to the bride-elect and her sisters, to Lady Montagu, and your own young ladies. I have scarce room to add, that I always am your Lordship's very faithful WALTER SCOTT.'

On the 12th of July, Sir Walter, as usual, left Edinburgh, but he was recalled within a week, by the business to which the following note refers:—

'*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

'EDINBURGH, 31*st July* 1822.

'MY DEAR TERRY—I have not a moment to think my own thoughts, or mind my own matters: would you were here, for we are in a famous perplexity: the motto on the St. Andrew's Cross, to be presented to the King, is "*Righ Albainn gu brath*," that is, "Long Life to the King of Scotland." "*Righ gu brath*" would make a good motto for a button—"the King for ever." I wish to have Montrose's sword down with the speed of light, as I have promised to let my cousin, the Knight-Marshal, have it on this occasion. Pray send it down by the mail-

[1] Lady Charlotte Scott, sister to the present Duke of Buccleuch, was married about this time to her cousin Lord Stopford, now Earl of Courtown.

coach: I can add no more, for the whole of this work has devolved on my shoulders. If Montrose's sword is not quite finished, send it nevertheless.[1]—Yours entirely,

'W. SCOTT.'

We have him here in the hot bustle of preparation for King George the Fourth's reception in Scotland, where his Majesty spent a fortnight in the ensuing August, as he had a similar period in Ireland the year before, immediately after his coronation. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden, —'the butcher Cumberland.' Now that the very last dream of Jacobitism had expired with the Cardinal of York, there could be little doubt that all the northern Tories, of whatever shade of sentiment, would concur to give their lawful Sovereign a greeting of warm and devoted respect; but the feelings of the Liberals towards George IV. personally had been unfavourably tinctured, in consequence of several incidents in his history—above all—(speaking of the mass of population addicted to that political creed)—the unhappy dissensions and scandals which had terminated, as it were but yesterday, in the trial of his Queen. The recent asperities of the political press on both sides, and some even fatal results to which these had led, must also be taken into account. On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment, which the new, but not young King,

[1] There is in the armoury at Abbotsford a sword presented by Charles I. to the great Marquis of Montrose—with Prince Henry's arms and cypher on one side of the blade, and his own on the other. Sir Walter had sent it to Terry for a new sheath, 1837.

One day at Dalkeith, during the King's visit, the late Duke of Montrose happened to sit next to Sir Walter, and complimented him on the vigorous muster of Border Yeomanry which Portobello Sands had exhibited that morning. 'Indeed,' said Scott, 'there's scarcely a man left to guard our homesteads.'—'I've a great mind,' quoth the Duke, 'to send a detachment of my tail to Abbotsford to make prize of my ancestor's sword.'—'Your Grace,' says Sir Walter drily, 'is very welcome to try—but we're near Philiphaugh yonder.'—[1839.]

had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question; and I believe it will now be granted by all who can recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority, and zeal, the more than full realization of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this northern progress.

Whether all the arrangements which Sir Walter dictated or enforced, were conceived in the most accurate taste, is a different question. It appeared to be very generally thought, when the first programmes were issued, that the Highlanders, their kilts, and their bagpipes, were to occupy a great deal too much space in every scene of public ceremony connected with the King's reception. With all respect and admiration for the noble and generous qualities which our countrymen of the Highland clans have so often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population; and when one reflected how miserably their numbers had of late years been reduced in consequence of the selfish and hard-hearted policy of their landlords, it almost seemed as if there was a cruel mockery in giving so much prominence to their pretensions. But there could be no question that they were picturesque—and their enthusiasm was too sincere not to be catching; so that by and by even the coolest-headed Sassenach felt his heart, like John of Argyle's, 'warm to the tartan'; and high and low were in the humour, not only to applaud, but each, according to his station, to take a share in what might really be described as a sort of grand *terryfication* of the Holyrood chapters in Waverley; George IV., *anno ætatis* 60, being well contented to enact 'Prince Charlie,' with the Great Unknown himself for his Baron Bradwardine, '*ad exuendas vel detrahendas caligas domini regis post battalliam.*'

But Sir Walter had as many parts to play as ever tasked the Protean genius of his friend Mathews; and he played them all with as much cordial energy as animated the

exertions of any Henchman or Piper in the company. His severest duties, however, were those of stage-manager, and under these I sincerely believe any other human being's temper and patience would very soon have given way. The local magistrates, bewildered and perplexed with the rush of novelty, threw themselves on him for advice and direction about the merest trifles; and he had to arrange everything, from the ordering of a procession to the cut of a button and the embroidering of a cross. Ere the green-room in Castle Street had dismissed provosts, and bailies, and deacon-conveners of the trades of Edinburgh, it was sure to be besieged by swelling chieftains, who could not agree on the relative positions their clans had occupied at Bannockburn, which they considered as constituting the authentic precedent for determining their own places, each at the head of his little theatrical *tail*, in the line of the King's escort between the Pier of Leith and the Canongate. It required all Scott's unwearied good-humour and imperturbable power of face, to hear in becoming gravity the sputtering controversies of such fiery rivals, each regarding himself as a true potentate, the representative of Princes as ancient as Bourbon; and no man could have coaxed them into decent co-operation, except him whom all the Highlanders, from the haughtiest MacIvor to the slyest Callum-Beg, agreed in looking up to as the great restorer and blazoner of their traditionary glories. He had, however, in all this most delicate part of his administration, an admirable assistant in one who had also, by the direction of his literary talents, acquired no mean share of authority among the Celts—namely, the late General David Stewart of Garth, author of the 'History of the Highland Regiments.' On Garth (seamed all over with the scars of Egypt and Spain) devolved the Toy-Captainship of the *Celtic Club*, already alluded to as an association of young civilians, enthusiastic for the promotion of the philabeg—and he drilled and conducted that motley array in such style, that they formed, perhaps, the most splendid feature in the whole of this plaided panorama. But he, too, had a potential voice in the conclave of rival chieftains,

—and, with the able backing of this honoured veteran, Scott succeeded finally in assuaging all their heats, and reducing their conflicting pretensions to terms of truce, at least, and compromise. A ballad (now included in his works), wherein these magnates were most adroitly flattered, was widely circulated among them and their followers, and was understood to have had a considerable share of the merit in this peace-making; but the constant hospitality of his table was a not less efficient organ of influence. A friend coming in upon him as a detachment of Duniewassails were enjoying, for the first time, his 'Cogie now the King's come,' in his breakfast parlour, could not help whispering in his ear—'You are just your own Lindesay in Marmion—*still thy verse hath charms*';—and indeed, almost the whole of the description thus referred to might have been applied to him when arranging the etiquettes of this ceremonial; for, among other persons in place and dignity who leaned to him for support on every question, was his friend and kinsman, the late worthy Sir Alexander Keith, Knight-Marischal of Scotland; and—

> Heralds and pursuivants, by name
> Bute, Islay, Marchmont, Rothsay, came,
> Attendant on a King-at-arms,
> Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
> That feudal strife had often quell'd,
> When wildest its alarms.
>
> He was a man of middle age,
> In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
> As on King's errand come;
> But in the glances of his eye,
> A penetrating, keen, and sly
> Expression found its home. . . .
> *Still is thy name in high account,*
> *And still thy verse hath charms,*
> Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
> Lord Lion King-at-Arms.[1]

About noon of the 14th of August, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith; but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to 'warstle for a sunny day,' the weather was so

[1] Marmion, Canto IV. Stanzas 6, 7.

unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the Royal George; and, says the newspaper of the day,—

> When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced to the King, —'What!' exclaimed his Majesty, 'Sir Walter Scott!—The man in Scotland I most wish to see! Let him come up.' This distinguished Baronet then ascended the ship, and was presented to the King on the quarter-deck, where, after an appropriate speech in name of the Ladies of Edinburgh, he presented his Majesty with a St. Andrew's Cross in silver, which his fair subjects had provided for him.[1] The King, with evident marks of satisfaction, made a gracious reply to Sir Walter, received the gift in the most kind and condescending manner, and promised to wear it in public, in token of acknowledgment to the fair donors.

To this record let me add that, on receiving the poet on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whisky, and having drunk his health in this national liquor, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his own bumper, made a request that the King would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health; and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street; but—to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions—on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visitors of the time. The Poet Crabbe, to whom he had been introduced when last in London by Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, after repeatedly promising to follow up the acquaintance by an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering, wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been

[1] This was the cross inscribed 'Righ Albainn gu brath,' about which Scott wrote to Terry on the 31st July.

packed, and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position—he sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors, or the like: but very little harm had been done except the breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to be repaired: as for the scratch that accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence, as even when mounting the '*cat-dath*, or battle-garment' of the Celtic Club, he adhered, like his hero Waverley, to *the trews*.

By six o'clock next morning, Sir Walter, arrayed in the 'Garb of old Gaul' (which he had of the Campbell tartan, in memory of one of his great grandmothers), was attending a muster of these gallant Celts in the Queen Street Gardens, where he had the honour of presenting them with a set of colours, and delivered a suitable exhortation, crowned with their rapturous applause. Some members of the Club, all of course in their full costume, were invited to breakfast with him. He had previously retired for a little to his library, and when he entered the parlour, Mr. Crabbe, dressed in the highest style of professional neatness and decorum, with buckles in his shoes, and whatever was then considered as befitting an English clergyman of his years and station, was standing in the midst of half-a-dozen stalwart Highlanders, exchanging elaborate civilities with them, in what was at least meant to be French. He had come into the room shortly before, without having been warned about such company, and hearing the party conversing together in an unknown tongue, the polite old man had adopted, in his first salutation, what he considered as the universal language. Some of the Celts, on their part, took him for some foreign abbé or bishop, and were doing their best to explain to him that they were not the wild savages for which, from the startled glance he had thrown on their hirsute proportions, there seemed but too much reason to suspect he had taken them; others, more perspicacious, gave in to the

thing for the joke's sake; and there was high fun when Scott dissolved the charm of their stammering, by grasping Crabbe with one hand, and the nearest of these figures with the other, and greeted the whole group with the same hearty *good-morning*.

Perhaps no Englishman of these recent days ever arrived in Scotland with a scantier stock of information about the country and the people than (judging from all that he said, and more expressively looked) this illustrious poet had brought with him in August 1822. It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island, in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owning no affinity with Englishmen, either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own, bearing considerably more resemblance to an American Indian's than to that of an old-fashioned rector from the Vale of Belvoir. His eyes were opened wide—but they were never opened in vain; and he soon began, if not to comprehend the machinery which his host had called into motion on this occasion, to sympathize at least very warmly and amiably with all the enthusiasm that animated the novel spectacle before him.

I regret that, having been on duty with a troop of yeomanry cavalry on the 15th of August, I lost the opportunity of witnessing Mr. Crabbe's demeanour when this magnificent scene was first fully revealed upon him. The whole aspect of the city and its vicinity was, in truth, as new to the inhabitants as it could have been even to the Rector of Muston:—every height and precipice occupied by military of the regular army, or by detachments of these more picturesque irregulars from beyond the Grampians—lines of tents, flags, and artillery, circling Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, and the Calton Hill—and the old black Castle and its rock, wreathed in the smoke of repeated salvoes, while a huge banner-royal, such as had not waved there since 1745, floated and flapped over all:—every street, square, garden, or open space below, paved with solid masses of silent expectants, except only where

glittering lines of helmets marked the avenue guarded for the approaching procession. All captiousness of criticism sank into nothing before the grandeur of this vision: and it was the same, or nearly so, on every subsequent day when the King chose to take part in the devised ceremonial. I forget where Sir Walter's place was on the 15th; but on one or other of these occasions I remember him seated in an open carriage, in the Highland dress, armed and accoutred as heroically as Garth himself (who accompanied him), and evidently in a most bardish state of excitement, while honest Peter Mathieson managed as best he might four steeds of a fierier sort than he had usually in his keeping—though perhaps, after all, he might be less puzzled with them than with the cocked-hat and regular London Jehu's flaxen wig, which he, for the first and last time, displayed during 'the royal fortnight.'

The first procession from Leith to Holyrood was marshalled in strict adherence, it must be admitted, to the poetical programme—

> Lord! how the pibrochs groan and yell!
> Macdonnell's ta'en the field himsel',
> Macleod comes branking o'er the fell—
> Carle, now the King's come!

But I must transcribe the newspaper record in its details, because no one could well believe, unless he had a specimen of these before him, the extent to which the Waverley and Rob Roy *animus* was allowed to pervade the whole of this affair.

Three Trumpeters Mid-Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry.
Squadron Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.
Two Highland Pipers.
Captain Campbell, and Tail of Breadalbane.
Squadron Scots Greys.
Two Highland Pipers.
Colonel Stewart of Garth and Celtic Club.
Sir Evan M'Gregor mounted on horseback, and Tail of M'Gregor.
Herald mounted.
Marischal Trumpets mounted.
A Marischal Groom on foot.
Three Marischal Grooms abreast.

Two Grooms. { Six Marischal Esquires mounted, three abreast. } Two Grooms.

Henchman. Groom. { Knight Marischal mounted with his baton of office. } *Henchman.* Groom.

Marischal rear-guard of Highlanders.

Sheriff mounted.

Sheriff-officers.

Deputy Lieutenants in green coats, mounted.

Two Pipers.

General Graham Stirling, and Tail.

Barons of Exchequer.

Lord Clerk Register.

Lords of Justiciary and Session, in carriages.

Marquis of Lothian, Lord Lieutenant, mounted.

Two Heralds, mounted.

Glengarry mounted, and Grooms.

Young Glengarry and two supporters—Tail.

Four Herald Trumpeters.

White Rod, mounted, and Equerries.

Lord Lyon Depute, mounted, and Grooms.

Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, mounted.

Two Heralds, mounted.

Squadron Scots Greys.

Royal Carriage and Six, in which were the Marquis of Graham, Vice-Chamberlain; Lord G. Beresford, Comptroller of the Household; Lord C. Bentinck, Treasurer of the Household; Sir R. H. Vivian, Equerry to the King; and two others of his Majesty's suite.

Ten Royal Footmen, two and two.

Sixteen Yeomen, two and two.

Archers. { THE KING, attended by the Duke of Dorset, Master of the Horse, and the Marquis of Winchester, Groom of the Stole. } Archers.

Sir Thomas Bradford and Staff.

Squadron Scots Greys.

Three Clans of Highlanders and Banners.

Two Squadrons of the Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.

Grenadiers of 77th Regiment.

Two Squadrons Third Dragoon Guards.

Band, and Scots Greys.

It is, I believe, of the dinner of this 15th August in Castle Street that Crabbe penned the following brief record in his Journal:—'Whilst it is fresh in my memory, I should describe the day which I have just passed, but I do

not believe an accurate description to be possible. What avails it to say, for instance, that there met at the sumptuous dinner, in all the costume of the Highlanders, the great chief himself, and officers of his company. This expresses not the singularity of appearance and manners—the peculiarities of men all gentlemen, but remote from our society—leaders of clans—joyous company. Then we had Sir Walter Scott's national songs and ballads, exhibiting all the feelings of clanship. I thought it an honour that Glengarry even took notice of me, for there were those, and gentlemen too, who considered themselves honoured by following in his train. There were also Lord Errol, and the Macleod, and the Fraser, and the Gordon, and the Fergusson;[1] and I conversed at dinner with Lady Glengarry, and did almost believe myself a harper, or bard, rather—for harp I cannot strike; and Sir Walter was the life and soul of the whole. It was a splendid festivity, and I felt I know not how much younger.'—*Life of* CRABBE, p. 273.

[1] Sir Walter's friend, the Captain of Huntlyburn, did not, as far as I remember, sport the Highland dress on this occasion, but no doubt his singing of certain Jacobite songs, etc., contributed to make Crabbe set him down for the chief of a clan. Sir Adam, however, is a Highlander by descent, though the name, *MacErries*, has been, for two or three generations, translated into *Fergusson*; and even his reverend and philosophical father had, on at least one remarkable occasion, exhibited the warmth of his Celtic blood in perfection. In his essay on the life of John Home, Scott says—'Dr. Adam Fergusson went as chaplain to the Black Watch, or 42nd Highland Regiment, when that corps was first sent to the Continent. As the regiment advanced to the battle of Fontenoy, the commanding officer, Sir Robert Munro, was astonished to see the chaplain at the head of the column, with a broadsword drawn in his hand. He desired him to go to the rear with the surgeons, a proposal which Adam Fergusson spurned. Sir Robert at length told him that his commission did not entitle him to be present in the post which he had assumed.—"D—n my commission," said the warlike chaplain, throwing it towards his colonel. It may easily be supposed that the matter was only remembered as a good jest; but the future historian of Rome shared the honours and dangers of that dreadful day, where, according to the French themselves, "the Highland furies rushed in upon them with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest."'—Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xix. p. 331.

The King took up his residence, during his stay in his northern dominions, at Dalkeith Palace, a noble seat of the Buccleuch family, within six miles of Edinburgh; and here his dinner party almost daily included Sir Walter Scott, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year), than from all the flattering condescension he lavished on himself. From Dalkeith the King repaired to Holyroodhouse two or three times, for the purposes of a levee or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St. Giles', when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets, struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week days; and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says, in his Journal—'The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout.'

Another very splendid day was that of a procession from Holyrood to the Castle, whereof the whole ceremonial had obviously been arranged under Scott's auspices, for the purpose of calling up, as exactly as might be, the time-hallowed observance of 'the Riding of the Parliament.' Mr. Peel (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) was desirous of witnessing this procession privately, instead of taking a place in it, and he walked up the High Street accordingly in company with Scott, some time before the royal cavalcade was to get into motion. The Poet was as little desirous of attracting notice as the Secretary, but he was soon recognised—and his companion, recently revisiting Scotland, expressed his lively remembrance of the enthusiastic veneration with which Scott's person was then greeted by all classes of his countrymen. When proposing Sir Walter's memory at a public dinner given to him in Glasgow, in December 1836, Sir Robert Peel said,—'I had the honour of accompanying his late Majesty as his Secretary of State, when he paid a visit to Edinburgh. I suppose there are many of you here who were present on that occasion, at that memorable scene,

when the days of ancient chivalry were recalled—when every man's friendship seemed to be confirmed—when men met for the first time, who had always looked to each other with distrust, and resolved in the presence of their Sovereign to forget their hereditary feuds and animosities. In the beautiful language of Dryden—

> Men met each other with erected look—
> The steps were higher that they took;
> Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
> And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd.

'Sir Walter Scott took an active lead in these ceremonies. On the day on which his Majesty was to pass from Holyroodhouse, he proposed to me to accompany him up the High Street, to see whether the arrangements were completed. I said to him—"You are trying a dangerous experiment—you will never get through in privacy." He said, "They are entirely absorbed in loyalty." But I was the better prophet; he was recognised from the one extremity of the street to the other, and never did I see such an instance of national devotion expressed.'

The King at his first levee diverted many, and delighted Scott, by appearing in the full Highland garb, —the same brilliant *Steuart Tartans*, so called, in which certainly no Steuart, except Prince Charles, had ever before presented himself in the saloons of Holyrood. His Majesty's Celtic toilette had been carefully watched and assisted by the gallant Laird of Garth, who was not a little proud of the result of his dexterous manipulations of the royal plaid, and pronounced the King 'a vera pretty man.' And he did look a most stately and imposing person in that beautiful dress—but his satisfaction therein was cruelly disturbed when he discovered, towering and blazing among and above the genuine Glengarries and Macleods and MacGregors, a figure even more portly than his own, equipped, from a sudden impulse of loyal ardour, in an equally complete set of the self-same conspicuous Steuart tartans:—

He caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt—
While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman.[1]

In truth, this portentous apparition cast an air of ridicule and caricature over the whole of Sir Walter's Celtified pageantry. A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen, who had previously made acquaintance with the worthy Guildhall Baronet, and tasted the turtle-soup of his voluptuous yacht, tortured him, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by suggesting that, after all, his costume was not quite perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneers' advertisements say, 'regardless of expense,' exclaimed that he must be mistaken —begged he would explain his criticism—and as he spoke, threw a glance of admiration on a *skene dhu* (black knife), which, like a true 'warrior and hunter of deer,' he wore stuck into one of his garters. 'Oo ay—oo ay,' quoth the Aberdonian; 'the knife's a' right, mon,—but faar's your speen?'—(where's your spoon?) Such was Scott's story —but whether he 'gave it a cocked-hat and walking-cane,' in the hope of restoring the King's good-humour, so grievously shaken by this heroical *doppel-ganger*, it is not very necessary to enquire.

As in Hamlet, there was to be a play within the play; and, by his Majesty's desire, William Murray's company performed, in his presence, the drama of *Rob Roy*. James Ballantyne's newspaper chronicle says:—

In the pit and galleries the audience were so closely wedged together, that it would have been found difficult to introduce between any two, even the point of a sabre. It was astonishing to observe the patience, and even the good-nature, with which the audience bore the extreme pressure. No one, indeed, could hope to better his situation by any effort; but the joy which was felt seemed completely to have absorbed every feeling of uneasiness. The boxes were filled with the rank, wealth, and beauty of Scotland. In this dazzling galaxy were observed the gallant Sir David Baird, Colonel Stewart of Garth, Glengarry, the Lord Provost, and Sir Walter Scott; each of whom, as he entered, was greeted with loud acclamations.

At ten minutes past eight, the shouts of the multitude announced

[1] Byron's *Age of Bronze*.

the approach of the King, which was confirmed by an outrider, who galloped up with the intelligence. The universal feeling of breathless suspense which at this moment pervaded the audience cannot be described, and will never be forgotten. Our gracious King now stood before his assembled subjects. The momentary pause of death-like stillness which preceded the King's appearance, gave a deep tone of enthusiasm to the shout—the prolonged and heartfelt shout, which for more than a minute rent the house. The waving of handkerchiefs, of the plumed bonnet, and the tartan scarf, added much to the impressive gladness of the scene which, at this instant, met the eye of the Chief of Chiefs. His Majesty, with his wonted affability, repeatedly bowed to the audience, while the kindly smile which beamed from his manly countenance expressed to this favoured portion of his loving subjects the regard with which he viewed them.

The play was *Rob Roy*, which his Majesty, in the best taste, had been pleased to command, out of compliment, doubtless, to the country. During the whole performance, the King paid the greatest attention to the business of the stage, and laughed very heartily at some of the more odd incidents,—such as the precipitate retreat of Mr. Owen beneath the bed-clothes—the contest in which the Bailie displays his prowess with the *het* poker—and the Bailie's loss of an essential part of his wardrobe. His Majesty seemed fully to comprehend and to relish very much the good-natured wit and innocent sarcasms of the Glasgow magistrate. He laughed outright when this most humorous of functionaries said to Frank Osbaldiston, who was toying with Matty,—'Nane o' your Lun'on tricks'; when he mentioned the distinguishing appellatives of Old and Young Nick, which the citizens had bestowed upon his father and himself; when he testified his distrust of Major Galbraith, who 'has mair brandy than brains,' and of the Highlanders, of whom he says, 'They may quarrel amang themselves now and then, and gie ane anither a stab wi' a dirk or a slash wi' a claymore; but, tak my word on't, they're ay sure to join in the lang run against a' wha hae purses in their pockets and breeks on their hinder ends'; and when he said to the boy who returned him his hat and wig, 'That's a braw callant! ye'll be a man before your mither yet.'

On the 24th of August the Magistrates of Edinburgh entertained their Sovereign with a sumptuous banquet in the Parliament House; and upon that occasion also Sir Walter Scott filled a prominent station, having been invited to preside over one of the tables. But the most striking homage (though apparently an unconscious one) that his genius received during this festive period, was, when his Majesty, after proposing the health of his hosts the Magistrates and Corporation of the northern capital,

rose and said there was one toast more, and but one, in which he must request the assembly to join him,—'I shall simply give you,' said he, '*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes.' So completely had this hallucination taken possession, that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty's impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains.

Scott's early associations, and the prime labours and honours of his life, had been so deeply connected with the Highlands, that it was no wonder he should have taught himself to look on their clans and chiefs with almost as much affection and respect as if he had had more than a scantling of their blood in his veins. But it was necessary to be an eye-witness of this royal visit, in order to comprehend the extent to which he had allowed his imagination to get the mastery over him as to all these matters; and perhaps it was necessary to understand him thoroughly on such points, in his personal relations, feelings, and demeanour, before one could follow his genius to advantage in some of its most favoured and delightful walks of exertion. The strongest impression, however, which the whole affair left on my mind was, that I had never till then formed any just notion of his capacity for practical dealing and rule among men. I do not think he had much in common with the statesmen and diplomatists of his own age and country; but I am mistaken if Scott could not have played in other days either the Cecil or the Gondomar; and I believe no man, after long and intimate knowledge of any other great poet, has ever ventured to say that he could have conceived the possibility of any such parts being adequately filled on the active stage of the world, by a person in whom the powers of fancy and imagination had such predominant sway, as to make him in fact live three or four lives habitually in place of one. I have known other literary men of energy perhaps as restless as his; but all such have been entitled to the designation of *busy-bodies*—busy almost exclusively about

trifles, and above all, supremely and constantly conscious of their own remarkable activity, and rejoicing and glorying in it. Whereas Scott, neither in literary labour nor in continual contact with the affairs of the world, ever did seem aware that he was making any very extraordinary exertion. The machine, thus gigantic in its impetus, moved so easily, that the master had no perception of the obstructions it overcame—in fact, no measure for its power. Compared to him, all the rest of the *poet* species that I have chanced to observe nearly—with but one glorious exception—have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives—and at best to fill the sum with dreams; and I am persuaded that, taking all ages and countries together, the rare examples of indefatigable energy, in union with serene self-possession of mind and character, such as Scott's, must be sought for in the roll of great sovereigns or great captains, rather than in that of literary genius.

In the case of such renowned practical masters, it has been usual to account for their apparent calmness amidst the stirring troubles of the world, by imputing to them callousness of the affections. Perhaps injustice has been done by the supposition; but at all events, hardly could any one extend it to the case of the placid man of the imaginative order;—a great depicter of man and nature, especially, would seem to be, *ex vi termini*, a profound sympathizer with the passions of his brethren, with the weaknesses as well as with the strength of humanity. Such assuredly was Scott. His heart was as 'ramm'd with life' (to use a phrase of Ben Jonson's) as his brain; and I never saw him tried in a tenderer point than he was during the full whirl of splendour and gaiety that seemed to make every brain but his dizzy in the Edinburgh of August 1822.

Few things had ever given him so much pleasure as William Erskine's promotion to the Bench. It seemed to have restored his dearest friend to content and cheerfulness, and thus to have doubled his own sources of enjoyment. But Erskine's constitution had been shaken before

he attained this dignity; and the anxious delicacy of his conscience rendered its duties oppressive and overwhelming. In a feeble state of body, and with a sensitive mind stretched and strained, a silly calumny, set afoot by some envious gossip, was sufficient literally to chase him out of life. On his return to Edinburgh about the 20th of July, Scott found him in visible danger; he did whatever friendship could do to comfort and stimulate him; but all was in vain. Lord Kinnedder survived his elevation hardly half a year—and who that observed Scott's public doings during the three or four weeks I have been describing, could have suspected that he was daily and nightly the watcher of a deathbed, or the consoler of orphans; striving all the while against

> True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
> Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown?

I am not aware that I ever saw him in such a state of dejection as he was when I accompanied him and his friend Mr. Thomas Thomson from Edinburgh to Queensferry, in attendance upon Lord Kinnedder's funeral. Yet that was one of the noisiest days of the royal festival, and he had to plunge into some scene of high gaiety the moment after he returned. As we halted in Castle Street, Mr. Crabbe's mild, thoughtful face appeared at the window, and Scott said, on leaving me,—'Now for what our old friend there puts down as the crowning curse of his poor player in the Borough—

> To hide in rant the heart-ache of the night.'

The very few letters that Sir Walter addressed to friends at a distance during the King's stay in Scotland are chiefly occupied with the calumny which proved fatal to Erskine,—the pains which his friends took, at his request, to sift it to the bottom,—their conviction that he had been charged with an improper *liaison*, without even a shadow of justice,—and their ineffectual efforts to soothe his morbid sensibility. In one of these letters Scott says,—'The legend would have done honour

to the invention of the devil himself, especially the object (at least the effect) being to torture to death one of the most soft-hearted and sensitive of God's creatures. I think it was in his nature to like female society in general better than that of men; he had also what might have given some slight shadow to these foul suspicions, an air of being particular in his attentions to women, a sort of Philandering which I used to laugh at him about. The result of a close investigation having been completely satisfactory, one would have thought the business at an end—but the shaft had hit the mark. At first, while these matters were going on, I got him to hold up his head pretty well; he dined with me, went to the play with my wife—got court dresses for his daughters, whom Lady Scott was to present, and behaved, in my presence at least, like a man, feeling indeed painfully, but bearing up as an innocent man ought to do. Unhappily I could only see him by snatches—the whole business of the reception was suddenly thrown on my hands, and with such a general abandonment, I may say, on all sides, that to work from morning till night was too little time to make the necessary arrangements. In the meantime, poor Erskine's nerves became weaker and weaker; he was by nature extremely sensitive, easily moved to smiles or tears, and deeply affected by all those circumstances in society to which men of the world become hardened; as, for example, formal introductions to people of rank, and so forth; he was unhappily haunted by the idea that his character, assailed as it had been, was degraded in the eyes of the public, and no argument could remove this delusion. At length fever and delirium came on; he was bled repeatedly and very copiously—a necessary treatment perhaps, but which completely exhausted his weak frame. On the morning of Tuesday, the day of the King's arrival, he waked from his sleep, ordered his window to be opened that he might see the sun once more, and was a dead man immediately after. And so died a man whose head and heart were alike honourable to his kind, and died merely because he could not endure

the slightest stain on his reputation.—The present is a scene of great bustle and interest, but though I *must* act my part, I am not, thank God, obliged at this moment to write about it.'

In another letter, of nearly the same date, Scott says—'It would be rather difficult for any one who has never lived much among my good country-people, to comprehend that an idle story of a love-intrigue, a story alike base and baseless, should be the death of an innocent man of high character, high station, and well advanced in years. It struck into poor Erskine's heart and soul, however, quite as cruelly as any similar calumny ever affected a modest woman—he withered and sunk. There is no need that I should say peace be with him! If ever a pure spirit quitted this vale of tears, it was William Erskine's. I must turn to and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters.'

The following letter to his son, now a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars, but not yet returned from his German travels, was written a few days later :—

'My dearest Walter—This town has been a scene of such giddy tumult since the King's coming, and for a fortnight before, that I have scarce had an instant to myself. For a long time everything was thrown on my hand, and even now, looking back, and thinking how many difficulties I had to reconcile, objections to answer, prejudices to smooth away, and purses to open, I am astonished that I did not fever in the midst of it. All, however, has gone off most happily; and the Edinburgh populace have behaved themselves like so many princes. In the day when he went in state from the Abbey to the Castle with the Regalia borne before him, the street was lined with the various trades and professions, all arranged under their own deacons and office-bearers, with white wands in their hands, and with their banners, and so forth; as they were all in their Sunday's clothes, you

positively saw nothing like mob, and their behaviour, which was most steady and respectful towards the King, without either jostling or crowding, had a most singular effect. They shouted with great emphasis, but without any running or roaring, each standing as still in his place as if the honour of Scotland had depended on the propriety of his behaviour. This made the scene quite new to all who had witnessed the Irish reception. The Celtic Society, "all plaided and plumed in their tartan array,"[1] mounted guard over the regalia while in the Abbey with great military display and steadiness. They were exceedingly nobly dressed and armed. There were two or three hundred Highlanders besides, brought down by their own Chiefs, and armed *cap-à-pie*. They were all put under my immediate command by their various Chiefs, as they would not have liked to have received orders from each other—so I acted as Adjutant-General, and had scores of them parading in Castle Street every day, with *piob agus brattach*, namely, pipe and banner. The whole went off excellently well. Nobody was so gallant as the Knight-Marischal, who came out with a full retinue of Esquires and Yeomen,—Walter and Charles were his pages. The Archers acted as gentlemen-pensioners, and kept guard in the interior of the palace. Mamma, Sophia, and Anne were presented, and went through the scene with suitable resignation and decorum. In short, I leave the girls to tell you all about balls, plays, sermons, and other varieties of this gay period. To-morrow or next day the King sets off; and I also take my departure, being willing to see Canning before he goes off for India, if, indeed, they are insane enough to part with a man of his power in the House of Commons at this eventful crisis.

'You have heard of poor Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh's) death by his own hand, in a fit of insanity. This explains a story he once told me of having seen a ghost, and which I thought was a very extraordinary narrative from the lips of a man of so much sense and

[1] Campbell's *Lochiel's Warning*.

steadiness of nerve. But no doubt he had been subject to aberrations of mind, which often create such phantoms.

'I have had a most severe personal loss in my excellent friend Lord Kinnedder, whose promotion lately rejoiced us so much. I leave you to judge what pain this must have given me, happening as it did in the midst of a confusion from which it was impossible for me to withdraw myself. . . .

'All our usual occupations have been broken in upon by this most royal row. Whether Abbotsford is in progress or not, I scarcely know: in short, I cannot say that I have thought my own thoughts, or wrought my own work, for at least a month past. The same hurry must make me conclude abruptly.—Ever yours, most affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.'

The ghost story to which the foregoing letter alludes, was this:—Lord Castlereagh, when commanding, in early life, a militia regiment in Ireland, was stationed one night in a large desolate country-house, and his bed was at one end of a long dilapidated room, while at the other extremity a great fire of wood and turf had been prepared within a huge gaping old-fashioned chimney. Waking in the middle of the night, he lay watching from his pillow the gradual darkening of the embers on the hearth, when suddenly they blazed up, and a naked child stepped from among them upon the floor. The figure advanced slowly towards Lord Castlereagh, rising in stature at every step, until on coming within two or three paces of his bed, it had assumed the appearance of a ghastly giant, pale as death, with a bleeding wound on the brow, and eyes glaring with rage and despair. Lord Castlereagh leaped from his bed, and confronted the figure in an attitude of defiance. It retreated before him, diminishing as it withdrew, in the same manner that it had previously shot up and expanded; he followed it pace by pace, until the original childlike form disappeared among the embers. He then went back to his bed, and was disturbed no more This story Lord Castlereagh told with perfect

gravity at one of his wife's supper parties in Paris in 1815, when Scott was among the hearers. I had often heard him repeat it—before the fatal catastrophe of August 1822 afforded the solution in the text—when he merely mentioned it as a singularly vivid dream, the product probably of a feverish night following upon a military debauch,—but affording a striking indication of the courageous temper, which proved true to itself even amidst the terrors of fancy.

Circumstances did not permit Sir Walter to fulfil his intention of being present at the public dinner given in Liverpool, on the 30th August, to Mr. Canning, who on that occasion delivered one of the most noble of all his orations, and soon afterwards, instead of proceeding, as had been arranged, to take on him the supreme government of British India, was called to fill the place in the Cabinet which Lord Londonderry's calamitous death had left vacant. The King's stay in Scotland was protracted until the 29th of August. He then embarked from the Earl of Hopetoun's magnificent seat on the Firth of Forth, and Sir Walter had the gratification of seeing his Majesty, in the moment of departure, confer the honour of knighthood on two of his friends—both of whom, I believe, owed some obligation in this matter to his good offices—namely, Captain Adam Fergusson, deputy-keeper of the Regalia, and Henry Raeburn, R.A., properly selected as the representative of the fine arts in Scotland. This amiable man and excellent artist, however, did not long survive the receipt of his title. Sir Henry died on the 8th of July 1823—the last work of his pencil having been, as already mentioned, a portrait of Scott.

On the eve of the King's departure, he received the following communication:—

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., etc., etc., Castle Street.*

'EDINBURGH, *August* 28, 1822.

'MY DEAR SIR—The King has commanded me to acquaint you that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland with-

out conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments for the deep interest you have taken in every ceremony and arrangement connected with his Majesty's visit, and for your ample contributions to their complete success.

'His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been effected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you.

'The King wishes to make you the channel of conveying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment. He does justice to the ardent spirit of loyalty by which they are animated, and is convinced that he could offer no recompense for their services so gratifying to them as the assurance, which I now convey, of the esteem and approbation of their Sovereign.

'I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, with great truth, most truly and faithfully yours,

'ROBERT PEEL.'

Sir Walter forwarded copies of Mr. Peel's paragraph touching the Highlanders to such heads of clans as had been of late in his counsels, and he received very grateful letters in return from Macleod, Glengarry, Sir Evan MacGregor, and several others of the order, on their return to the hills—as also from the Countess (afterwards Duchess) of Sutherland, whose son, Lord Francis, had, as she playfully expressed it, 'been out,' as her representative at the head of the most numerous and best appointed of all the kilted detachments. Glengarry was so delighted with what the Secretary of State had said, that the paragraph in question soon found its way to the newspapers; and then there appeared, in some Whig journal, a sarcastic commentary upon it, insinuating that, however highly the King might now choose to eulogize the poet

and his Celtic allies, his Majesty had been considerably annoyed with much of their arrangements and proceedings, and that a visible coolness had, in fact, been manifested towards Sir Walter during the King's stay in the north. As this idle piece of malice has been revived in some formal biographies of recent date, I may as well dispose of it for ever,[1] by extracting the following notes, which passed in the course of the next month between Scott and the Secretary of the Admiralty, whose official duty, I presume, it was to be in waiting at Ramsgate when the King disembarked from his yacht.—The 'Dean Cannon' to whom these notes allude, was a clerical humorist, Dean of a fictitious order, who sat to Mr. Theodore Hook for the jolly Rector of Fuddle-cum-Pipes in his novel of Maxwell.

'*To J. W. Croker, Esq., M.P., Admiralty, London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Thursday.*

'MY DEAR CROKER—What have you been doing this fifty years? We had a jolly day or two with your Dean Cannon at Edinburgh. He promised me a call if he returned through the Borders; but, I suppose, passed in the midst of the royal turmoil, or, perhaps, got tired of sheep's-head and haggis in the pass of Killiecrankie. He was wrong if he did; for even Win Jenkins herself discovered that where there were heads there must be bodies, and my forest haunch of mutton is noway to be sneezed at.—Ever yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

[1] I find that a writer in one of the Radical magazines has very recently revived this absurdity. He (or she) states with gravity, that Sir Walter had been led to expect the honour of a visit from the King in Castle Street, and that Sir Walter's cards of invitation for this grand occasion were actually issued,—but that his Majesty, in consequence of disgust at some of the poet's proceedings, abruptly signified that he had changed his mind. There is not a word of truth in this story. At all events, neither I, nor my brother-in-law Charles Scott, who was under Sir Walter's roof at the time, ever heard the slightest hint of such an affair. I rather think that at one time the King had meant to return to London by land, and it seems very probable that he might have announced his gracious intention of in that case calling, as he passed, at Abbotsford.—[1839.]

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Abbotsford.*

'ADMIRALTY, *Sept.* 29, 1822.

'MY DEAR SCOTT—I wish it *were* "fifty years since" you had heard of me, as, perhaps, I should find myself by and by celebrated, like the Baron of Bradwardine and some other friends of "sixty years since."

'I have not seen our Dean since his Scotch tour. I am sorry he was with you in such a period of bustle, as I should have liked to hear his sober observations on the usual style of Edinburgh society.

'I had the honour of receiving his Majesty on his return, when he, after the first three words, began most graciously to tell me "all about our friend Scott." Some silly or malicious person, his Majesty said, had reported that there had been some coolness between you; but he added that it was utterly false, and that he was, in every respect, highly pleased and gratified, and, he said, *grateful* for the devoted attention you had paid him; and he celebrated very warmly the success that had attended all your arrangements.

'Peel has sung your praises to the same tune; and I have been flattered to find that both the King and Peel thought me so much your friend, that they, as it were, *reported* to me the merit of "my friend Scott."—Yours ever, J. W. CROKER.'

If Sir Walter lost something in not seeing more of Dean Cannon—who, among other social merits, sang the Ballads of Robin Hood with delightful skill and effect—there was a great deal better cause for regret in the unpropitious time selected for Mr. Crabbe's visit to Scotland. In the glittering and tumultuous assemblages of that season, the elder bard was (to use one of his friend's favourite similitudes) very like *a cow in a fremd loaning;* and though Scott could never have been seen in colours more likely to excite admiration, Crabbe had hardly any opportunity of observing him in the everyday loveable-

ness of his converse. Sir Walter's enthusiastic excitement about the kilts and the processions seemed at first utterly incomprehensible to him; but by degrees he caught not a little of the spirit of the time, and even indited a set of stanzas, which have perhaps no other merit than that of reflecting it. He also perceived and appreciated Scott's dexterous management of prejudices and pretensions. He exclaims, in his Journal,—'What a keen discriminating man is my friend!' But I shall ever regret that Crabbe did not see him at Abbotsford among his books, his trees, and his own good simple peasants. They had, I believe, but one quiet walk together, and it was to the ruins of St. Anthony's Chapel and Muschat's Cairn, which the deep impression made on Crabbe by the Heart of Mid-Lothian had given him an earnest wish to see. I accompanied them; and the hour so spent, in the course of which the fine old man gave us some most touching anecdotes of his early struggles, was a truly delightful contrast to the bustle and worry of miscellaneous society which consumed so many of his few hours in Scotland. Scott's family were more fortunate than himself in this respect. They had from infancy been taught to reverence Crabbe's genius, and they now saw enough of him to make them think of him ever afterwards with tender affection.

CHAPTER LVII

Mons Meg—Jacobite Peerages—Invitation from the Galashiels Poet—Progress of Abbotsford House—Letters to Joanna Baillie, Terry, Lord Montagu, etc.—Completion and Publication of Peveril of the Peak.

1822-1823

THOUGH Mr. Crabbe found it necessary to leave Scotland without seeing Abbotsford, this was not the case with many less celebrated friends from the south, who had flocked to Edinburgh at the time of the Royal Festival. Sir Walter's house was, in his own phrase, 'like a cried fair,' during several weeks after the King's departure; and as his masons were then in the highest activity upon the addition to the building, the bustle and tumult within doors and without was really perplexing. We shall find him confessing that the excitement of the Edinburgh scenes had thrown him into a fever, and that he never needed repose more. He certainly never had less of it.

Nor was an unusual influx of English pilgrims the only legacy of 'the glorious days' of August. A considerable number of persons who had borne a part in the ceremonies of the King's reception fancied that their exertions had entitled them to some substantial mark of royal approbation; and post after post brought long-winded despatches from these clamorous enthusiasts, to him who, of all Scotchmen, was supposed to enjoy, as to matters of this description, the readiest access to the fountain of honour. To how many of these applications he accorded more than

a civil answer, I cannot tell; but I find that the Duke of York was too good a *Jacobite* not to grant favourable consideration to his request, that one or two poor half-pay officers who had distinguished themselves in the van of *the Celts*, might be, as opportunity offered, replaced in Highland regiments, and so reinvested with the untheatrical 'Garb of Old Gaul.'

Sir Walter had also a petition of his own. This related to a certain gigantic piece of ordnance, celebrated in the history of the Scottish Jameses under the title of *Mons Meg*, and not forgotten in Drummond's Macaronics—

——Sicuti Mons Megga crackasset,——

which had been removed from Edinburgh Castle to the Tower of London, after the campaign of 1745. When Scott next saw the King, after he had displayed his person on the chief bastion of the old fortress, he lamented the absence of Mons Meg on that occasion in language which his Majesty could not resist. There ensued a correspondence with the official guardians of Meg—among others, with the Duke of Wellington, then Master-General of the Ordnance, and though circumstances deferred her restoration, it was never lost sight of, and took place finally when the Duke was Prime Minister, which I presume smoothed petty obstacles, in 1829.

But the serious petition was one in which Sir Walter expressed feelings in which I believe every class of his fellow-countrymen were disposed to concur with him very cordially—and certainly none more so than the generous King himself. The object which the poet had at heart was the restoration of the Scottish Peerages forfeited in consequence of the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and the honourable families, in whose favour this liberal measure was soon afterwards adopted, appear to have vied with each other in the expression of their gratefulness for his exertions on their behalf. The following paper seems to be his sketch of the grounds on which the representatives of the forfeited Peers ought to approach the Ministry; and the view of their case thus suggested,

was, it will be allowed, dexterously selected, and persuasively enforced.

'*Hints Respecting an Application for a Reversal of the Attainders in* 1715 *and* 1745.

'*September* 1822.

'A good many years ago, Mr. Erskine of Mar, and other representatives of those noble persons who were attainted for their accession to the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, drew up a humble petition to the King, praying that his Majesty, taking into his royal consideration the long time which had since elapsed, and the services and loyalty of the posterity of the attainted Peers, would be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament an Act for reversing all attainders passed against those who were engaged in 1715 and 1745, so as to place their descendants in the same situation, as to rank, which they would have held had such attainders never taken place. This petition, it is believed, was proposed about the time that an Act was passed for restoring the forfeited estates, still in possession of the Crown; and it was imagined that this gracious act afforded a better opportunity for requesting a reversal of the attainders than had hitherto occurred, especially as it was supposed that the late Lord Melville, the great adviser of the one measure, was equally friendly to the other. The petition in question, however, it is believed, never was presented to the King—it having been understood that the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, was hostile to it, and that, therefore, it would be more prudent not to press it then. It is thought by some, that looking to his Majesty's late paternal and most gracious visit to his ancient kingdom of Scotland, in which he seemed anxious to revive and encourage all the proud recollections of its former renown, and to cherish all associations connected with the events of the olden times, as by the display of the Regalia, by the most distinguished attention to the Royal Archers, and by other similar observances, a fit time has now arrived for most humbly soliciting the royal attention to

the state of those individuals, who, but for the conscientious though mistaken loyalty of their ancestors, would now have been in the enjoyment of ancient and illustrious honours.

'Two objections might, perhaps, occur; but it is hoped that a short statement may be sufficient to remove them. It may be thought that if the attainders of 1715 and 1745 were reversed, it would be unjust *not* to reverse all attainders which had ever passed in any period of the English history—a measure which might give birth to such a multiplicity of claims for ancient English peerages, forfeited at different times, as might affect seriously the House of Lords, so as both to render that assembly improperly numerous, and to lower the precedency of many Peers who now sit there. To this it is submitted, as a sufficient answer, that there is no occasion for reversing any attainders previous to the accession of the present Royal Family, and that the proposed Act might be founded on a gracious declaration of the King, expressive simply of his wish to have all attainders reversed, for offences against his *own* royal House of Hanover. This limitation would at once give ample room for the display of the greatest magnanimity on the part of the King, and avoid the bad consequences indicated in the objection; for, with the exception of Lords Derwentwater and Widdrington, who joined in the Rebellion of 1715, the only Peers who ever joined in any insurrection against the Hanover family were Peers of Scotland, who, by their restoration, in so far as the families are not extinct, could not add to the number of the House of Lords, but would only occasion a small addition to the number of those already entitled to vote at the election of the Sixteen Representative Peers. And it seems plain, that in such a limitation there would be no more injustice than might have been alleged against the Act by which the forfeited estates, still in the hands of Government, were restored; while no compensation was given for such estates as had been already sold by Government. The same argument might have been stated, with equal force, against the late

reversal of the attainder of Lord Edward Fitzgerald: it might have been asked, with what sort of justice can you reverse this attainder, and refuse to reverse all attainders that ever took place either in England or Ireland? But no such objection was made, and the recommendation of the King to Parliament was received almost with acclamation. And now that the family of Lord E. Fitzgerald have been restored to the rights which he had forfeited, the petition in the present case will, it is hoped, naturally strike his Majesty with greater force, when he is pleased to recollect that his lordship's attainder took place on account of accession to a rebellion, of which the object was to introduce a foreign force into Ireland, to overturn the Constitution, and to produce universal misery; while the elder attainders now in question were the results of rebellions undertaken from views of conscientious, though mistaken, loyalty in many individuals, who were much attached to their country, and to those principles of hereditary succession to the Throne, in which they had been educated, and which, in almost every instance, ought to be held sacred.

'A second objection, perhaps, might be raised, on the ground that the reversal of the attainders in question would imply a censure against the conduct of that Government by which they were passed, and consequently an approval, in some measure, of those persons who were so attainted. But it might as well be said that the reversal of Lord E. Fitzgerald's attainder implied a censure on the Parliament of Ireland, and on the King, by whom that act had been passed; or that the restoration of an officer to the rank from which he had been dismissed by the sentence of a court-martial approved of by the King, would imply a censure on that court, or on that King. Such implication might, at all events, be completely guarded against by the preamble of the proposed Act—which might condemn the Rebellion in strong terms—but reverse the attainders, from the magnanimous wish of the King to obliterate the memory of all former discord, so far as his own House had been the object of attack, and from a just

sense of the meritorious conduct and undoubted loyalty of the descendants of those unfortunate though criminal individuals. And it is humbly submitted, that as there is no longer any Pretender to his Majesty's Crown, and as all classes of his subjects now regard him as both *de jure* and *de facto* the only true representative of our ancient race of Princes—now is the time for such an act of royal magnanimity, and of Parliamentary munificence, by which the honour of so many noble houses would be fully restored; while, at the same time, the *station* of the representatives of certain other noble houses, who have assumed titles, their right to which is, under the present law, much more than doubtful, would be fully confirmed, and placed beyond the reach of objection.'

In Scott's collection of miscellaneous MSS. the article that stands next to this draft of 'Hints' is one that I must indulge myself with placing in similar juxtaposition here. I have already said something of his friendly relations with the people of the only manufacturing village in his neighbourhood. Among other circumstances highly grateful to them was his regular attendance on the day when their Deacon and Convener for the year entered on his office—which solemnity occurred early in October. On the approach of these occasions, he usually received an invitation in verse, penned by a worthy weaver named Thomson, but known and honoured all over Teviotdale as 'the Galashiels Poet.' At the first of these celebrations that ensued the forthcoming of Rob Roy, this bard delighted his compeers, and not less their guest, by chanting a clever parody on the excellent song of 'Donald *Caird*,' *i.e. Tinker*, the chorus being—in place of Scott's

> Dinna let the Sherra ken
> Donald Caird's come again;—
> *Think ye does the Sherra ken,*
> *Rob MacGregor's come again:*

and that was thenceforth a standing ditty on the day of the Deacon. The Sheriff's presence at the installation of 1822 was requested by the following epistle:—

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Abbotsford.

MURRAY'S INN, GALASHIELS, *1st Oct.* 1822.

This year we rather 'gin to falter
If an epistle we should send ye.
Say some, 'Ye only plague Sir Walter,
He canna ilka year attend ye:
Last year, nae doubt, he condescended,
Just to be quit o' your palaver;
But he could ne'er ha'e apprehended
That ilka year ye'd ask the favour.
He's dined but lately wi' the King,
And round him there is sic a splendour,
He winna stoop to such a thing,
For a' the reasons ye can render:
Content yourselves wi' John o' Skye;
Your impudence deserves a wiper:
Ye'll never rest till he grow shy,
And e'en refuse to send his piper.'

These reasons a' may be withstood,
Wi' nae pretensions for a talker;—
Ye mauna lightly Deacon Wood,
But dine wi' him like Deacon Walker.
Your favourite dish is not forgot:
Imprimis, for your bill of fare,
We'll put a sheep's-head i' the pot,—
Ye'se get the cantle for your share:
And we've the best o' 'Mountain dew,'
Was gather'd whare ye mauna list,
In spite o' a' the gauger crew,
By Scotland's 'children o' the mist.'

Last year your presence made us canty,
For which we hae ye yet to thank;
This year, in faith, we canna want ye,
Ye're absence wad mak sic a blank.—
As a' our neibors are our friends,
The company is not selected;
But for to mak ye some amends,
There's not a social soul neglected.

We wish you luck o' your new biggin';
There's no the like o't on the Tweed;
Ye'll no mistak it by its riggin',—[1]
It is an oddity indeed.

The old song says—

'This is no mine ain house
I ken by the riggin o't,' etc.—*See Collection.*

To Lady Scott our kind respect—
  To her and to Miss Ann our thanks;
We hope this year they'll no neglect
  Again to smile upon our ranks.
Upon our other kind regards
  At present we will no be treating,
For some discourse we maun hae spared
  To raise the friendly crack at meeting.
So ye maun come, if ye can win—
  Gie's nae excuse, like common gentry,
If we suspect, as sure's a gun,
  On ABBOTSFORD we'll place a sentry.

It was a pleasant thing to see the annual procession of these weavers of Galashiels—or (for they were proud enough to adopt the name) of *Ganderscleuch*—as they advanced from their village with John of Skye at their head, and the banners of their craft all displayed, to meet Sir Walter and his family at the ford, and escort them in splendour to the scene of the great festivity. And well pleased was he to 'share the triumph and partake the gale' of Deacon Wood or Deacon Walker—and a proud man was Laureate Thomson when his health was proposed by the 'brother bard' of Abbotsford. At this Galashiels festival the Ettrick Shepherd also was a regular attendant. He used to come down the night before, and accompany Sir Walter in the only carriage that graced the march; and many of Hogg's best ballads were produced for the first time amidst the cheers of the men of Ganderscleuch. Meeting Poet Thomson not long since in a different part of the country, he ran up to me, with the tears in his eyes, and exclaimed, 'Eh, sir, it does me good to see you —for it puts me in mind of the grand days in our town, when Scott and Hogg were in their glory—and we were a' leal Tories!' Galashiels is now a nest of Radicalism—but I doubt if it be a happier place than in the times of Deacon Wood and Deacon Walker.

In the following letters we have, as many readers may think, rather too much of the 'new bigging' and 'the rigging o't'; but I cannot consent to curtail such characteristic records of the days when Scott was finishing Peveril

of the Peak, and projecting his inimitable portraitures of Louis XI. and Charles of Burgundy.

'*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *October* 5, 1822.

'MY DEAR TERRY—I have been "a *vixen* and a *griffin*," as Mrs. Jenkins says, for many days—in plain truth, very much out of heart. I know you will sympathize particularly with me on the loss of our excellent friend W. Erskine, who fell a victim to a hellishly false story which was widely circulated concerning him, or rather I should say to the sensibility of his own nature, which could not endure even the shadow of reproach—like the ermine, which is said to pine to death if its fur is soiled. And now Hay Donaldson[1] has followed him, an excellent man, who long managed my family affairs with the greatest accuracy and kindness. The last three or four years have swept away more than half the friends with whom I lived in habits of great intimacy—the poor Duke, Jocund Johnnie, Lord Somerville, the Boswells, and now this new deprivation. So it must be with us

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin ;[2]

and yet we proceed with our plantations and plans as if any tree but the sad cypress would accompany us to the grave, where our friends have gone before us. It is the way of the world, however, and must be so, otherwise life would be spent in unavailing mourning for those whom we have lost. It is better to enjoy the society of those who remain to us. I am heartily glad, my dear Terry, that you have carried through your engagement so triumphantly, and that your professional talents are at length so far appreciated as to place you in the first rank

[1] Mr. Hay Donaldson drew up an affecting sketch of his friend Lord Kinnedder's Life and Character, to which Scott made some additions, and which was printed, but not, I think, for public circulation. He died shortly afterwards, on the 30th of September 1822.

[2] Burns.

in point of emolument as in point of reputation. Your talents, too, are of a kind that will *wear well*, and health permitting, hold out to you a long course of honourable exertion; you should begin to make a little nest egg as soon as you can; the first little hoard which a man can make of his earnings is the foundation-stone of comfort and independence—so says one who has found it difficult to practise the lesson he offers you.

We are getting on here in the old style. The new castle is now roofing, and looks superb; in fact, a little too good for the estate, but we must work the harder to make the land suitable. The library is a superb room, but after all I fear the shelves ought not to be less than ten or twelve feet high; I had quite decided for nine feet, but on an exacter measurement this will not accommodate fully the books I have now in hand, and leaves no room for future purchases. Pray is there not a tolerable book on upholstery—I mean plans for tables, chairs, commodes, and such like? If so, I would be much obliged to you to get me a copy, and send it under Freeling's cover. When you can pick up a few odd books for me, especially dramatic, you will do me a great kindness, and I will remit the blunt immediately. I wish to know what the Montrose sword cost, that I may send the *gratility*. I must look about for a mirror for the drawing-room, large enough to look well between the windows. Beneath, I mean to place the antique mosaic slab which Constable has given me, about four feet and a half in length. I am puzzled about framing it. Another anxious subject with me is fitting up the little oratory—I have three thick planks of West-Indian cedar, which, exchanged with black oak, would, I think, make a fine thing.—I wish you had seen the King's visit here; it was very grand; in fact, in moral grandeur it was beyond anything I ever witnessed, for the hearts of the poorest as well as the greatest were completely merged in the business. William Murray behaved excellently, and was most useful. I worked like a horse, and had almost paid dear for it, for it was only a sudden and violent eruption that saved me from a dangerous

illness. I believe it was distress of mind, suppressed as much as I could, and mingling with the fatigue: certainly I was miserably ill, and am now only got quite better. I wish to know how Mrs. Terry, and you, and my little Walter are; also little miss. I hope, if I live so long, I may be of use to the former; little misses are not so easily accommodated.—Pray remember me to Mrs. Terry. Write to me soon, and believe me, always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Lieutenant Walter Scott, 15th Hussars, Berlin.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *7th October* 1822.

'MY DEAREST WALTER—I wrote you a full account of the King's visit, which went off *à merveille*. I suffered a good deal in consequence of excessive fatigue and constant anxiety, but was much relieved by a very inconvenient and nasty eruption which physicians call the *prickly heat*. Ross says, if it had not broke out I would have had a bad fever—in the meantime, though the complaint has gone off, my arms and legs are spotted like a leopard's. The King has expressed himself most graciously to me, both at leaving Edinburgh and since he returned. I know from sure authority he has scarce ever ceased to speak about the Scotch, and the fine taste and spirit of their reception.

'Some small accompts of yours have come in. This is wrong—you ought never to leave a country without clearing every penny of debt; and you have no apology for doing so, as you are never refused what I can afford. When you can get a troop, I shall expect you to maintain yourself without farther recourse on me, except in the case of extraordinary accident; so that, without pinching yourself, you must learn to keep all your expenses within your income; it is a lesson which if not learned in youth lays up much bitter regret for age.

'I am pleased with your account of Dresden, and could have wished you had gone on to Töplitz, Leipsic,

etc. At Töplitz Buonaparte had his fatal check, losing Vandamme, and about ten thousand men, who had pressed too unwarily on the allies after raising the siege of Dresden. These are marked events in your profession, and when you are on the ground you ought to compare the scene of action with such accounts as you can get of the motives and motions of the contending powers.

'We are all quite well here; my new house is quite finished as to masonry, and we are now getting on the roof just in time to face the bad weather. Charles is well at last writing — the Lockharts speak for themselves. Game is very plenty, and two or three pair of pheasants are among the young wood at Abbotslee. I have given strict orders there shall be no shooting of any kind on that side of the hill. Our house has been a little disturbed by a false report that puss had eat up the favourite robin-redbreast who comes every morning to sing for crumbs after breakfast, but the reappearance of Robin exculpates old Hinzie. On your birthday this week you become *major!*—God send you the wit and reflection necessary to conduct yourself as a man; from henceforward, my province will be to advise rather than to command.—Well, we shall have a little jollification, and drink your health on becoming legally major, which, I suppose, *you* think a much less matter than were you to become so in the military term.

'Mamma is quite well, and with Ann and Cousin Walter join in compliments and love.—Always affectionately yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

In the next letter to Terry, Scott refers to the death of an amiable friend of his, Mr. James Wedderburne, Solicitor-General for Scotland, which occurred on the 7th November; and we have an indication that Peveril of the Peak had reached the fourth volume, in his announcement of the subject for Quentin Durward.

'*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Nov.* 10*th*, 1822.

'MY DEAR TERRY—I got all the plans safe, and they are delightful. The library ceiling will be superb, and we have plenty of ornaments for it, without repeating one of those in the eating-room. The plan of shelves is also excellent, and will, I think, for a long time, suffice my collection. The brasses for the shelves I like—but not the price: the notched ones, after all, do very well. I have had three grand hauls since I last wrote to you. The pulpit, repentance-stool, King's seat, and God knows how much of carved wainscot, from the kirk of Dunfermline,[1] enough to coat the hall to the height of seven feet: —supposing it boarded above for hanging guns, old portraits, intermixed with armour, etc.—it will be a superb entrance-gallery: this is haul the first. Haul second is twenty-four pieces of the most splendid Chinese paper, twelve feet high by four wide, a present from my cousin Hugh Scott,[2] enough to finish the drawing-room and two bedrooms. Haul third is a quantity of what is called Jamaica cedar-wood, enough for fitting up both the drawing-room and the library, including the presses, shelves, etc.: the wood is finely pencilled and most beautiful, something like the colour of gingerbread; it costs very little more than oak, works much easier, and is never touched by vermin of any kind. I sent Mr. Atkinson a specimen, but it was from the plain end of the plank: the interior is finely waved and variegated. Your kind and unremitting exertions in our favour will soon plenish the drawing-room. Thus we at present stand. We have a fine old English cabinet, with china, etc.—and two superb elbow-chairs, the gift of Constable, carved most magnificently, with groups of children, fruit,

[1] For this *haul* Sir Walter was indebted to the Magistrates of Dunfermline.

[2] Captain Hugh Scott, of the East-India Company's Naval Service (now of Draycote House, near Derby), second son to the late Laird of Raeburn.

and flowers, in the Italian taste: they came from Rome, and are much admired. It seems to me that the mirror you mention, being framed in carved box, would answer admirably well with the chairs, which are of the same material. The mirror should, I presume, be placed over the drawing-room chimney-piece; and opposite to it I mean to put an antique table of mosaic marbles, to support Chantrey's bust. A good sofa would be desirable, and so would the tapestry-screen, if really fresh and beautiful; but as much of our furniture will be a little antiquated, one would not run too much into that taste in so small an apartment. For the library, I have the old oak chairs now in the little armoury, eight in number, and we might add one or two pair of the ebony chairs you mention. I should think this enough, for many seats in such a room must impede access to the books; and I don't mean the library to be on ordinary occasions a public room. Perhaps the tapestry-screen would suit better here than in the drawing-room. I have one library table here, and shall have another made for atlases and prints. For the hall I have four chairs of black oak. In other matters, we can make it out well enough. In fact, it is my object rather to keep under my new accommodations at first, both to avoid immediate outlay, and that I may leave room for pretty things which may occur hereafter. I would to Heaven I could take a cruise with you through the brokers, which would be the pleasantest affair possible, only I am afraid I should make a losing voyage of it. Mr. Atkinson has missed a little my idea of the oratory, fitting it up entirely as a bookcase, whereas I should like to have had recesses for curiosities—for the Bruce's skull[1] —for a crucifix, etc. etc.; in short, a little cabinet instead of a book-closet. Four sides of books would be perfectly sufficient; the other four, so far as not occupied by door or window, should be arranged tastefully for antiquities, etc., like the inside of an antique cabinet, with drawers

[1] A cast of the skull of King Robert the Bruce, made when his tomb was discovered during some repairs of Dunfermline Abbey, in 1819.

and shottles, and funny little arches. The oak screen dropped as from the clouds: it is most acceptable; I might have guessed there was only one kind friend so ready to supply hay to my hobby-horse. You have my views in these matters and your own taste; and I will send the *needful* when you apprise me of the amount total. Where things are not quite satisfactory, it is better to wait a while on every account, for the amusement is over when one has room for nothing more. The house is completely roofed, etc., and looks worthy of Mrs. Terry's painting. I never saw anything handsomer than the grouping of towers, chimneys, etc. upon the roof, when seen at a proper distance.

'Once more, let me wish you joy of your professional success. I can judge, by a thousand minute items, of the advance you make with the public, just as I can of the gradual progress of my trees, because I am interested in both events. You may say, like Burke, you were not "coaxed and dandled into eminence," but have fought your way gallantly, shown your passport at every barrier, and been always a step in advance, without a single retrograde movement. Every one wishes to advance rapidly, but when the desired position is gained, it is far more easily maintained by him whose ascent has been gradual, and whose favour is founded not on the unreasonable expectations entertained from one or two seasons, but from an habitual experience of the power of pleasing during several years. You say not a word of poor Wattles. I hope little Miss has not put his nose out of joint entirely.

'I have not been very well—a whoreson thickness of blood, and a depression of spirits arising from the loss of friends (to whom I am now to add poor Wedderburne), have annoyed me much; and Peveril will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, *entre nous*, a Scotch archer in the French king's guard, *tempore* Louis XI., the most picturesque of all times.—Always yours very faithfully, WALTER SCOTT.'

This letter contains the first allusion to the species of malady that ultimately proved fatal to Sir Walter Scott. He, as far as I know, never mentioned to any one of his family the symptoms which he here speaks of; but long before any serious apoplectic seizure occurred, it had been suspected by myself and by others of his friends, that he had sustained slight attacks of that nature, and concealed them.

The depression of spirits of which he complains, could not, however, have hung over him long; at least it by no means interrupted any of his usual occupations. A grievous interruption had indeed been occasioned by the royal visit, its preparations, and its legacy of visitants and correspondence; but he now laboured to make up his leeway, and Peveril of the Peak was completed, and some progress had also been achieved with the first volume of Quentin Durward, before the year reached its close. Nor had he ceased to contemplate future labour, and continued popularity, with the same firmness and hopefulness as ever. He had, in the course of October, completed his contract, and received Constable's bills, for another unnamed 'work of fiction'; and this was the last such work in which the great bookseller of Edinburgh was destined to have any concern. The engagement was in fact that redeemed three years afterwards by *Woodstock*.

Sir Walter was, as may be supposed, stimulated in all these matters by the music of the hammer and saw at Abbotsford. Witness this letter, written during the Christmas recess—

'*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *January 9th*, 1823.

'DEAR TERRY—It is close firing to answer letters the day they come to hand, but I am afraid of losing opportunities, as in the case of the mirror, not to be retrieved. I am first to report progress, for your consideration and Mr. Atkinson's, of what I have been doing here. Every-

thing about the house has gone *à rien mieux*, and the shell is completely finished; all the upper story and garrets, as well as the basement, have had their first coat of plaster, being first properly fenced from the exterior air. The only things which we now greatly need are the designs for the ceilings of the hall and drawing-room, as the smiths and plasterers are impatient for their working plans, the want of which rather stops them. I have taken actual, real, and corporal possession of my sitting-room, which has been fitted with a temporary floor, door, and window—the oratory, and the door into the library, being bricked up *ad interim*. This was a step of necessity, as my books began to suffer in Peter's garret, so they were brought up to the said room, and are all ranged in their old shelves and presses, so as to be completely comeatable. They have been now there a fortnight without the least appearance of damp, so dry do the brick facings make the wall; and as we keep good fires in the place (which, by the by, vents like all Mr. Atkinson's chimneys, in a superior style), I intend they shall remain there till they are transferred to *the* Library, so that this room will be fitted up last of all. I shall be then able to judge of a point on which I have at present some doubt —namely, the capacity of my library to accommodate my books. Should it appear limited (I mean, making allowance for future additions) I can perhaps, by Mr. Atkinson's assistance, fit up this private room with a gallery, which might enter by carrying the stair up the oratory, and renouncing the idea of fitting it up. The cedar, I assure you, is quite beautiful. I have had it sawn out into planks, and every one who looks at it agrees it will be more beautiful than oak. Indeed, what I have seen of it put to that use, bears no comparison unless with such heart-of-oak as Bullock employed, and that you know is veneered. I do not go on the cry in this, but practical knowledge, for Mr. Waugh, my neighbour, a West-Indian planter (but himself bred a joiner), has finished the prettiest apartment with it that I ever saw. I should be apt to prefer the brass notches, were the difference only what

you mention, namely, £20; but I cannot make out how that should be, unless by supposing the joiners' wages much higher than with us. But indeed, in such a library as mine, when the books are once catalogued, I could perhaps in many instances make fixed shelves answer the turn, by adopting a proper arrangement from the beginning. I give up the Roslin drop in the oratory—indeed I have long seen it would not do. I think the termination of it may be employed as the central part of Mr. Atkinson's beautiful plan for the recess in the library; by the by, the whole of that ceiling, with the heads we have got, will be the prettiest thing ever seen in these parts.

'The plan preferred for the door between the entrance-hall and ante-room was that which was marked B. To make this plain, I re-enclose A and C—which mode of explaining myself puts me in mind of the evidence of an Irish officer.—"We met three rebels, one we shot, hanged another, the third we flogged and made a guide of."—"Which of the three did you flog and make a guide of?"—"Him whom we neither shot nor hanged." Understand, therefore, that the plan not returned is that fixed upon. I think there is nothing left to say about the house excepting the chimney-pieces. I have selected for the hall chimney-piece one of the cloister arches of Melrose, of which I enclose an accurate drawing. I can get it finished here very beautifully, at days' wages, in our dark red freestone. The chimneys of drawing-room, library, and my own room, with grates conforming, will be got much better in London than anywhere else; by the by, for the hall I have got an old massive chimney-grate which belonged to the old persecutor Archbishop Sharp, who was murdered on Magus Moor. All our grates must be contrived to use wood as well as coal, with what are called half-dogs.

'I am completely Lady Wishfort[1] as to the escritoire. In fact, my determination would very much depend on the possibility of showing it to advantage; for if it be such as is set up against a wall, like what is called, *par excellence*,

[1] See Congreve's Comedy of The Way of the World.

a writing-desk, you know we have no space in the library that is not occupied by book-presses. If, on the contrary, it stands quite free,—why, I do not know—I must e'en leave it to you to decide between taste and prudence. The silk damask, I fancy, we must have for the drawing-room curtains; those in the library we shall have of superfine crimson cloth from Galashiels, made out of mine own wool. I should like the silk to be sent down in the bales, as I wish these curtains to be made up on a simple useful pattern, without that paltry trash of drapery, etc. etc. I would take the armoury curtains for my pattern, and set my own tailor, Robin Goodfellow, to make them up; and I think I may save on the charge of such an upholsterer as my friend Mr. Trotter, much of the difference in the value of materials. The chairs will be most welcome. Packing is a most important article, and I must be indebted to your continued goodness for putting that into proper hands. The mirror, for instance—O Lord, sir!

'Another and most important service would be to procure me, from any person whom Mr. Atkinson may recommend, the execution of the enclosed commission for fruit-trees. We dare not trust Edinburgh; for though the trade never makes a pause in furnishing you with the most rare plants, insomuch that an old friend of mine, the original Jonathan Oldbuck, having asked one of them to supply him with a dozen of *anchovies*, he answered "he had plenty of them, but, being a delicate plant, they were still in the hot-house"—yet, when the said plants come to bear fruit, the owner may adopt the classical line—

Miratur novas frondes et non sua poma.

My new gardener is a particularly clever fellow in his way, and thinks the enclosed kinds like to answer best. Our new garden-wall will be up in spring, time enough to have the plants set. By the way, has Mr. Atkinson seen the way of heating hot-houses, etc., adapted by Mr. Somebody at Glasgow, who has got a patent? It is by a new application of steam, which is poured into a vaulted roof, made completely air-tight, except where it communicates

with an iron box, so to speak, a receptacle of the heated air. This vaulted recess is filled with bricks, stones, or such like substances, capable of receiving and retaining an extreme degree of heat from the steam with which they are surrounded. The steam itself is condensed and carried off; but the air, which for many hours continues to arise from these heated bricks, ascends into the iron receptacle, and is let off by ventilators into the space to be heated, in such quantities as may be desired. The excellence of this plan is not only the saving of fuel, but also and particularly the certainty that the air cannot be over-heated, for the temperature at hottest does not exceed 95 degrees—nor over-chilled, for it continues to retain, and of course to transmit, the same degree of heated air, or but with little variation, for ten or twelve hours, so as to render the process of forcing much more certain and simple than it has been from any means hitherto devised. I daresay that this is a very lame explanation, but I will get a perfect one for Mr. Atkinson if he wishes it. The Botanical Garden at Glasgow has adopted the plan, and they are now changing that of Edinburgh for the same purpose. I have not heard whether it has been applied to houses; but, from the principle, I should conceive it practicable.

'Peveril has been stopped ten days, having been driven back to Leith Roads by stress of weather. I have not a copy here, but will write to Ballantyne to send you one forthwith. I am sick of thinking of it myself. We hear of you often, and always of your advancing favour with the public. It is one of many cases in which the dearly beloved public has come round to my decided opinion, after seeming to waver for a time. Washington Irving's success is another instance of the same. Little Walter will, I hope, turn out all we can wish him; and Mrs. Terry's health, I would fain hope, will be completely re-established. The steamboats make a jaunt to Scotland comparatively so speedy and easy, that I hope you will sometimes cast both of yourselves this way. Abbotsford, I am sure, will please you, when you see all your dreams realized, so far as concerns elevation, etc.

'John Thomson, Duddingstone, has given me his most splendid picture, painted, he says, on purpose for me —a true Scottish scene. It seems to me that many of our painters shun the sublime of our country, by labouring to introduce trees where doubtless by search they might be found, but where most certainly they make no conspicuous part of the landscape, being like some little folks who fill up a company, and put you to the proof before you own to have seen them. Now this is Fast Castle, famous both in history and legend, situated near St. Abb's Head, which you most certainly must have seen, as you have cruised along the coast of Berwickshire. The view looks from the land down on the ragged ruins, a black sky and a foaming ocean beyond them. There is more imagination in the picture than in any I have seen of a long time—a sort of Salvator Rosa's doings.—*Revenons à nos moutons.* I find that the plans for the window-shutters of the entrance-hall are much wanted. My wainscot will not be altogether seven feet—about six. Higher it cannot be, because of the pattern of the Dunfermline part, and lower I would not have it, because the armour, etc. must be suspended beyond the reach of busy and rude fingers, to which a hall is exposed. You understand I mean to keep lighter, smaller, and more ornate objects of curiosity in the present little room, and have only the massive and large specimens, with my fine collection of horns, etc. in the hall. Above the wainscot, I propose the wall to be planked and covered with cartridge-paper, and then properly painted in wainscot, to match the arrangement beneath.

'I have now, as your own Dogberry says, bestowed all my tediousness upon you;—yet I have still a question of yours to answer on a certain bookseller's part. Unquestionably I know many interesting works of the kind he mentions, which might be translated from the German:—almost all those of Musæus, of which Beddoes made two volumes, and which are admirably written; many of La Motte Fouqué; several from the collection bearing the assumed name of Beit Weber. But there is a point more essential to their success with the British

public than even the selection. There is in the German mode of narration, an affectation of deep metaphysical reflection and protracted description and discussion which the English do not easily tolerate; and whoever translates their narratives with effect should be master of the taste and spirit of both nations. For instance, I lately saw a translation of "Sintram und seine Gefährten," or Sintram and his Comrades, the story in the world which, if the plot were insinuated into the *boxes*, as Bayes says, would be most striking, translated into such English as was far more difficult to me than the original German. I do not know where an interpreter such as I point to could be found; but a literal *jog-trotter*, such as translated the passages from Goethe annexed to the beautiful engravings, which you sent me,[1] would never make a profitable job. The bibliopole must lay his account to seek out a man of fancy, and pay him well. I suppose my friend Cohen[2] is above superintending such a work, otherwise he is the man to make something of it. Perhaps he might be induced to take it in hand for the love of the task. All who are here—namely, my lovely lady and the Lady Anne—salute you and Mrs. Terry with the most sincere good wishes.—Faithfully yours,

'W. SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—Direct to Edinburgh, where I shall be on the 14th. Perhaps the slightest sketch of the escritoire might enable me to decide. If I could swop my own, which cost me £30, it might diminish my prudential scruples. Poor little Johnnie would have offered the prime cost at once. Your letter shall go to James Ballantyne. I think I have something new likely to be actually dramatical. I will send it you presently; but, on your life, show it no one, for certain reasons. The very name is kept secret, and, strange to tell, it will be printed without one.'

[1] I presume this alludes to the English edition of Retsch's Outlines from Faust.

[2] Mr. Cohen is now Sir Francis Palgrave, K.H.

The precaution mentioned in this P.S. was really adopted in the printing of Quentin Durward. It had been suggested by a recent alarm about one of Ballantyne's workmen playing foul, and transmitting proof-sheets of Peveril while at press to some American pirate.

Peveril of the Peak appeared, then, in January 1823. Its reception was somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The post-haste rapidity of the Novelist's execution was put to a severe trial, from his adoption of so wide a canvass as was presented by a period of twenty busy years, and filled by so very large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Fenella was an unfortunate conception; what is good in it is not original, and the rest extravagantly absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romancers, in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed; the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most inartificially brought about. All this is true; and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakspeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those (I name but a few) of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chiffinch—sketches more vivid than those of Young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate? The severest censor of this novel was Mr. Senior; yet he was just as well as severe. He could not dismiss the work without admitting that Peveril, 'though entitled to no precedency,' was, on the whole, 'not inferior to his brethren,

taken as a class'; and upon that class he introduced a general eulogy, which I shall gratify my readers by extracting:[1]

It had become a trite remark, long before there was the reason for it which now exists, that the Waverley Novels are, even from their mere popularity, the most striking literary phenomena of the age. And that popularity, unequalled as it is in its extent, is perhaps more extraordinary in its permanence. It has resisted the tendency of the public, and perhaps of ourselves, much as we struggle against it, to think every subsequent work of the same author inferior to its predecessors, if it be not manifestly superior. It has resisted the satiety which might have been predicted as the necessary consequence of the frequent repetition of similar characters and situations. Above all, it has withstood *pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*. And, in spite of acute enemies, and clumsy friends, and bungling imitators, each successive novel succeeds in obtaining a fortnight of attention as deep and as exclusive as was bestowed upon the Bride of Lammermoor, or the Heart of Mid-Lothian. We have heard this popularity accounted for in many various ways. It has been attributed to the picturesque reality of Sir Walter Scott's descriptions, to the truth and individuality of his characters, to the depth of his pathos and the gaiety of his humour, to the purity and candour of his morality, and to the clear, flexible, and lively, yet unaffected style, which is so delightful a vehicle of his more substantial merits.

But we do not think that these qualities, even taken together, sufficiently account for such an effect as has been produced. In almost all of them he has had equals—in some, perhaps, superiors—and though we know of no writer of any age or any nation who has united all these excellences in so high a degree, their deficiencies have been balanced by strength, in what are our author's weakest points, interest and probability in the fable, and clearness of narration.

We are inclined to suggest as the additional cause of his success, the manner in which his works unite the most irreconcilable forms, and the most opposite materials. He exhibits, sometimes in succession, and sometimes intermingled, tragedy and the romance, comedy and the novel. Great events, exalted personages, and awful superstitions, have, in general, been the exclusive province of the two former. But the dignity which has been supposed to belong to those styles of writing, has in general excluded the representation of the every-day occurrences and familiar emotions, which, though parts of great events, and incident to great people, are not characteristic of either. And as human nature is principally conversant in such occurrences and emotions, it has in general been inadequately or falsely repre-

[1] I the rather quote this criticism, as it was published in the *London Review*—a journal which stopped at the second or third number, and must therefore have had a very narrow circulation.

sented in tragedy and romance; inadequately by good writers, and falsely by bad—the former omitting whatever could not be made splendid and majestic, the latter exaggerating what they found really great, and attempting to give importance to what is base and trivial, and sacrificing reason and probability to render freebooters dignified, and make familiar friends converse in heroics. Homer and Euripides are the only exceptions among the ancients; and no modern tragedian, except Shakspeare, has ventured to make a king's son, 'remember that poor creature, small-beer.' Human nature, therefore, fell into the hands of comedians and novelists; but they seem either to have thought that there was something in the feelings and sufferings of ordinary mortality inconsistent with those who are made of the porcelain clay of the earth; or not to have formed sufficiently general conceptions, to venture beyond the limits of their own experience. Their characters, therefore, are copied from the originals with whom the writer, and therefore the reader, is familiar: they are placed in situations which derive no interest from their novelty; and the usual catastrophe is an event which every reader has experienced or expected.

We may compare tragedy to a martyrdom by one of the old masters; which, whatever be its merit, represents persons, emotions, and events so remote from the experience of the spectator, that he feels the grounds of his approbation and blame to be in a great measure conjectural. The romance, such as we generally have seen it, resembles a Gothic window-piece, where monarchs and bishops exhibit the symbols of their dignity, and saints hold out their palm branches, and grotesque monsters in blue and gold pursue one another through the intricacies of a never-ending scroll, splendid in colouring, but childish in composition, and imitating nothing in nature but a mass of drapery and jewels thrown over the commonest outlines of the human figure. The works of the comedian and novelist, in their least interesting forms, are Dutch paintings and caricatures; in their best, they are like Wilkie's earlier pictures, accurate imitations of pleasing, but familiar objects—admirable as works of art, but addressed rather to the judgment than to the imagination.

Our author's principal agents are the mighty of the earth, often mixed, in his earlier works, with beings of more than earthly attributes. He paints the passions which arm sect against sect, party against party, and nation against nation. He relates, either episodically or as the main object of his narrative, the success or failure of those attempts which permanently affect the happiness of states; conspiracies and rebellions, civil war and religious persecution, the overthrow of dynasties and changes of belief—

> There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
> And treason labouring in the traitor's thought;
> On the other side there stood destruction bare,
> Unpunish'd rapine, and a waste of war;
> Contest, with sharpen'd knives in cloysters drawn,
> And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.[1]

[1] Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite*, Book II.

So far he has nothing in common with the novelist or the comedian. But he writes for times when the veil of high life is rent or torn away —when all men are disposed to scrutinize, and competent to judge— when they look through and through kings and statesmen, and see that they are and act as mere men. He has, therefore, treated those lofty subjects with a minuteness of detail, and an unsparing imitation of human nature, in its foibles as well as its energies, which few writers, excepting the three whom we have mentioned, have had the boldness and the philosophy to employ in the representation of exalted characters and national events. 'His story requires preachers and kings, but he thinks only on men'; and, well aware that independence and flattery must heighten every peculiarity, he has drawn in a royal personage the most laughable picture that perhaps ever was exhibited of human folly and inconsistency. By his intermixture of public and private events, he has shown how they act and react on one another; how results which appear, to him who views them from the distance of history, to depend on causes of slow and irresistible operation, are produced, or prevented, or modified, by the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and often the caprice of individuals; and on the other hand, how essential national tranquillity is to individual happiness—what family discord and treachery, what cruelty, what meanness, what insolence, what rapacity, what insecurity—in short, what vice and misery of every kind, must be witnessed and felt by those who have drawn the unhappy lot of existence in times of civil war and revolution.

We have no doubt that his constant introduction of legal proceedings (a subject as carefully avoided by his predecessors) materially assists the plausibility of his narratives. In peaceful times, the law is the lever which sets in motion a great part of our actions, and regulates and controls them all. And if, in times of civil disturbance, its regular and beneficial operation be interrupted (and indeed such an interruption is the criterion, and the great mischief of civil disturbance), yet the forms of law are never in more constant use. Men who would not rob or murder, will sequestrate and condemn. The advantage, the gratification of avarice or hatred, is enjoyed by all—the responsibility is divided; since those who framed the iniquitous law have not to execute it, and those who give effect to it did not create it. The recurrence, therefore, in our author's works, of this mainspring of human affairs, has a double effect. If the story were true, we should expect to meet with it; supposing it fictitious, we should expect it to be absent.

An example will illustrate much of what we have tediously, and we fear obscurely, attempted to explain. We will take one from Waverley. The principal scenes are laid in a royal palace, on a field of battle where the kingdom is the stake, and at the headquarters of a victorious army. The actors are, an exiled prince, reclaiming the sceptre of his ancestors, and the armed nobility and gentry of his kingdom. So far we are in the lofty regions of romance. And in any other hands than those of Sir Walter Scott, the language and conduct of these great people would have been as dignified as their situations. We should have heard nothing of the hero in his new costume 'majoring afore

the muckle pier-glass'—of his arrest by the host of the Candlestick—of his examination by the well-powdered Major Melville—or his fears of being informed against by Mrs. Nosebag. The Baron would not have claimed to draw off the princely *caligæ*. Fergus would not have been influenced, in bringing his sister to the camp, by the credit to be obtained through her beauty and accomplishments. We should not have been told of the staff-appointment refused by Waverley, or of the motives which caused him first to march with the M'Ivors, and afterwards with the Baron. In short, we should have had a uniform and imposing representation of a splendid scene, but calculated to leave false recollections with the uninstructed, and none at all with the judicious reader. But when we study the history of the rebellion in Waverley, we feel convinced that, though the details presented to us never existed, yet they must resemble what really happened; and that while the leading persons and events are as remote from those of ordinary life as the inventions of Scuderi, the picture of human nature is as faithful as could have been given by Fielding or Le Sage.

I fear the reader will hardly pardon me for bringing him down abruptly from this fine criticism to a little joke of the Parliament House. Among its lounging young barristers of those days, Sir Walter Scott, in the intervals of his duty as clerk, often came forth and mingled much in the style of his own coeval *Mountain*. Indeed the pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors was one of the most remarkable and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character at this period of his consummate honour and celebrity; but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentleman or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him, when he did not even work at his desk with the sun full upon him. However, one morning soon after Peveril came out, one of our most famous wags (now famous for better things), namely, Mr. Patrick Robertson, commonly called by the endearing Scottish *diminutive* 'Peter,' observed that tall conical white head advancing above the crowd towards the fire-place, where the usual roar of fun was going on among the briefless, and said, 'Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril—I see *the Peak*.' A laugh ensued, and the Great Unknown, as he withdrew from the circle after a few minutes' gossip, insisted that I

should tell him what our joke upon his advent had been. When enlightened, being by that time half-way across the 'babbling hall,' towards his own *Division*, he looked round with a sly grin, and said, between his teeth, 'Ay, ay, my man, as weel Peveril o' the Peak ony day, as Peter o' the Painch' (paunch)—which being transmitted to the brethren of *the stove school*, of course delighted all of them, except their portly Coryphæus. But *Peter's* application stuck; to his dying day, Scott was in the Outer House *Peveril of the Peak*, or *Old Peveril*—and, by and by, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*. Many a little note have I had from him (and so probably has *Peter* also), reproving, or perhaps encouraging, Tory mischief, and signed, 'Thine, PEVERIL.'—Specimens enough will occur by and by—but I may as well transcribe one here, doggerel though it be. Calling at my house one forenoon, he had detected me in writing some nonsense for Blackwood's Noctes Ambrosianæ; and after he went home, finding an apology from some friend who had been expected to dine with a Whiggish party that day in Castle Street, he despatched this billet:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Northumberland Street.

Irrecoverable sinner,
Work what Whigs you please till dinner,
But be here exact at six.
Smooth as oil with mine to mix.
(Sophy may step up to tea,
Our table has no room for *she*.)
Come (your *gum* within your cheek)
And help sweet
PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

CHAPTER LVIII

Quentin Durward in progress—Letters to Constable, and Dr Dibdin—The Author of Waverley and the Roxburghe Club—The Bannatyne Club founded—Scott Chairman of the Edinburgh Oil Gas Company, etc.—Mechanical Devices at Abbotsford—Gasometer—Air-Bell, etc. etc.—The Bellenden Windows.

1823

It was, perhaps, some inward misgiving towards the completion of Peveril, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next novel; and as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on English scenery and history, try the still bolder experiment of a continental excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged and strengthened by the return of his friend, Mr. Skene, about this time, from a tour in France; in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, representing landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been most sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr. Skene's MS. collections were placed at his disposal, and he took from one of their chapters the substance of the *original* Introduction to Quentin Durward. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking were frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger. I remember observing him many times in the Advocates' Library poring over maps and gazetteers with care and anxiety;

and the following is one of many similar notes which his bookseller and printer received during the progress of the novel :—

'*To Archibald Constable, Esq.*

'CASTLE STREET, *23rd Jan.* 1823.

'MY DEAR CONSTABLE—It is a vile place this village of Plessis les Tours, that can baffle both you and me. It is a place famous in history; and, moreover, is, as your Gazetteer assures us, a village of a thousand inhabitants, yet I have not found it in any map, provincial or general, which I have consulted. I think something must be found in Malte Brun's Geographical Works. I have also suggested to Mr. Cadell that Wraxall's History of France, or his Travels, may probably help us. In the meantime, I am getting on; and instead of description holding the place of sense, I must try to make such sense as I can find, hold the place of description.

'I know Hawkwood's story;[1] he was originally, I believe, a tailor in London, and became a noted leader of Condottieri in Italy.

'I shall be obliged to Mr. David[2] to get from the Advocates' Library, and send me, the large copy of Philip de Commines, in 4to. I returned it, intending to bring mine from Abbotsford, but left it in my hurry; and the author is the very key to my period.—Yours ever,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

[1] Hawkwood—from whose adventures Constable had thought the author of Quentin Durward might take some hints—began life as apprentice to a London tailor. But, as Fuller says, 'he soon turned his needle into a sword, and his thimble into a shield,' and raised himself to knighthood, in the service of Edward III. After accumulating great wealth and fame in the predatory wars of Italy, he died in 1393, at Florence, where his funeral was celebrated with magnificence amidst the general lamentations of the people.—See '*The Honourable Prentice, or the Life and Death of Sir John Hawkwood*,' *etc.* London; 4to, 1615.

[2] Mr. David Constable, eldest son of the great bookseller, had been called to the Bar at Edinburgh.

He was much amused with a mark of French admiration which reached him (opportunely enough) about the same time—one of the few such that his novels seem to have brought him prior to the publication of Quentin Durward. I regret that I cannot produce the letter to which he alludes in the next of these notes; but I have by no means forgotten the excellent flavour of the champaign which soon afterwards arrived at Abbotsford, in a quantity greatly more liberal than had been stipulated for.

'*To A. Constable, Esq.*

'CASTLE STREET, *16th February* 1823.

'MY DEAR CONSTABLE—I send you a letter which will amuse you. It is a funny Frenchman who wants me to accept some champaign for a set of my works. I have written, in answer, that as my works cost me nothing I could not think of putting a value on them, but that I should apply to you. Send him by the mediation of Hurst & Robinson a set of my children and god-children (poems and novels), and if he found, on seeing them, that they were worth a dozen flasks of champaign, he might address the case to Hurst & Robinson, and they would clear it at the Custom-house and send it down.

'Pray return the enclosed as a sort of curiosity.—Yours, etc. WALTER SCOTT.'

A compliment not less flattering than this Frenchman's tender of champaign was paid to Scott within a few weeks of the appearance of Peveril. In the epistle introductory of that novel, Captain Clutterbuck amuses Dr. Jonas Dryasdust with an account of a recent visit from their common parent, 'the Author of Waverley,' whose outward man, as it was in those days, is humorously caricatured, with a suggestion that he had probably sat to Geoffrey Crayon for his 'Stout Gentleman of No. II.'; and who is made to apologize for the heartiness with which he pays his duty to the viands set before him, by

alleging that he was in training for the approaching anniversary of the Roxburghe Club, whose gastronomical zeal had always been on a scale worthy of their bibliomaniacal renown. 'He was preparing himself,' said the gracious and portly *Eidolon*, 'to hob-nob with the lords of the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin'—[why *negus?*]—'to share those profound debates which stamp accurately on each "small volume, dark with tarnished gold," its collar, not of S.S., but of R.R.—to toast the immortal memory of Caxton, Valderfer, Pynson, and the other fathers of that great art which has made all and each of us what we are.' This drollery in fact alluded, not to the Roxburghe Club, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life, under Sir Walter's own auspices, in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*, of which he was the founder and first president. The heroes of the Roxburghe, however, were not to penetrate the mystification of Captain Clutterbuck's report, and from their jovial and erudite board, when they next congregated around its 'generous flasks of Burgundy, each flanked by an uncut fifteener'—(so I think their reverend chronicler has somewhere depicted the apparatus)—the following despatch was forwarded :—

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.*

'*Feb.* 22, 1823.

'My dear Sir—The death of Sir M. M. Skyes, Bart., having occasioned a vacancy in our Roxburghe Club, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the Author of Waverley, who, from the Proheme to Peveril of the Peak, seems disposed to become one of the members thereof; and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said Club that the said Author may succeed to the said Baronet.—I am ever most sincerely yours,

'T. F. Dibdin, V.P.'

Sir Walter's answers to this, and to a subsequent letter of the Vice-President, announcing his formal election, were as follows :—

'*To the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, etc. etc. Kensington.*

'EDIN. *Feb.* 25, 1823.

'MY DEAR SIR—I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown Author of Waverley; namely, that he is certainly a Scotsman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of second sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him, *nominis umbra*, to a situation so worthy of envy.

'As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some token of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or such-like kickshaw, and for this purpose you had better send me the statutes of your learned body, which I will engage to send him in safety.

'It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair, like that of Banquo at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author, who "hath fernseed and walketh invisible," should not appear to claim it before I come to London (should I ever be there again), with permission of the Club, I who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, "dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration,"[1] would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

'It will be not uninteresting to you to know, that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club; but, having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view, it is to be called the Bannatyne Club, from

[1] Twelfth Night, Act III. Scene 4.

the celebrated antiquary, George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest record of old Scottish poetry. The first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will be drunk.—I am always, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To the Same.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *May* 1, 1823.

'MY DEAR SIR—I am duly honoured with your very interesting and flattering communication. Our Highlanders have a proverbial saying, founded on the traditional renown of Fingal's dog; "If it is not Bran," they say, "it is Bran's brother." Now, this is always taken as a compliment of the first class, whether applied to an actual cur, or parabolically to a biped; and, upon the same principle, it is with no small pride and gratification that I hear the Roxburghe Club have been so very flatteringly disposed to accept me as a *locum tenens* for the unknown author whom they have made the child of their adoption. As sponsor, I will play my part until the real Simon Pure make his appearance.

'Besides, I hope the devil does not owe me such a shame. Mad Tom tells us, that "the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman";[1] and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake as much of his honourable feelings as of his invisibility, and, retaining his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels.

'I regret deeply I cannot soon avail myself of my new privileges; but courts, which I am under the necessity of attending officially, sit down in a few days, and, *hei mihi!* do not arise for vacation until July. But I hope to be in town next spring; and certainly I have one strong additional reason for a London journey, furnished by the pleasure of meeting the Roxburghe Club. Make my most

[1] King Lear, Act III. Scene 5.

respectful compliments to the members at their next merry-meeting; and express, in the warmest manner, my sense of obligation.—I am always, my dear sir, very much your most obedient servant, WALTER SCOTT.'

In his way of taking both the Frenchman's civilities and those of the Roxburghers, we see evident symptoms that the mask had begun to be worn rather carelessly. He would not have written this last letter, I fancy, previous to the publication of Mr. Adolphus's Essays on the Authorship of Waverley.

Sir Walter, it may be worth mentioning, was also about this time elected a member of 'THE CLUB'—that famous one established by Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, at the Turk's Head, but which has now for a long series of years held its meetings at the Thatched House, in St. James's Street. Moreover, he had been chosen, on the death of the antiquary Lysons, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy—a chair originally founded at Dr. Johnson's suggestion, 'in order that *Goldy* might have a right to be at their dinners,' and in which Goldsmith has had several illustrious successors besides Sir Walter. I believe he was present at more than one of the festivals of each of these fraternities. A particular dinner of the Royal Academy, at all events, is recorded with some picturesque details in his essay on the life of his friend John Kemble, who sat next to him upon that occasion.

The Bannatyne Club was a child of his own, and from first to last he took a most fatherly concern in all its proceedings. His practical sense dictated a direction of their funds widely different from what had been adopted by the Roxburghe. Their *Club Books* already constitute a very curious and valuable library of Scottish history and antiquities: their example has been followed with not inferior success by the Maitland Club of Glasgow—which was soon afterwards instituted on a similar model, and of which also Sir Walter was a zealous associate; and since his death a third Club of this class, founded at Edinburgh in his honour, and styled *The Abbotsford Club*, has taken

a still wider range—not confining their printing to works connected with Scotland, but admitting all materials that can throw light on the ancient history or literature of any country, anywhere described or discussed by the Author of Waverley.

At the meetings of the Bannatyne he regularly presided from 1823 to 1831; and in the chair on their anniversary dinners, surrounded by some of his oldest and dearest friends—Thomas Thomson (the Vice-President), John Clerk (Lord Eldin), the Chief Commissioner Adam, the Chief Baron Shepherd, Lord Jeffrey, Mr. Constable—and let me not forget his kind, intelligent, and industrious ally, Mr. David Laing, bookseller, the Secretary of the Club—he from this time forward was the unfailing source and centre of all sorts of merriment 'within the limits of becoming mirth.' Of the origin and early progress of their institution, the reader has a full account in his reviewal of Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials of Scotland, the most important work as yet edited for the Bannatyne press;[1] and the last edition of his Poems includes his excellent song composed for their first dinner—that of March 9, 1823—and then sung by James Ballantyne, and heartily chorused by all the aforesaid dignitaries:—

'Assist me, ye friends of old books and old wine,
To sing in the praises of Sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore,
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends—one volume more,
We'll ransack old Banny for one volume more.'—etc.

On the morning after that first Bannatyne Club dinner, Scott sent such of the Waverley MSS. as he had in Castle Street to Mr. Constable, with this note:—

'EDINBURGH, *10th March* 1823.

'DEAR CONSTABLE—You, who have so richly endowed my little collection, cannot refuse me the pleasure of adding to yours. I beg your acceptance of a parcel of MSS., which

[1] See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. p. 199.

I know your partialities will give more value to than they deserve; and only annex the condition, that they shall be scrupulously concealed during the author's life, and only made forthcoming when it may be necessary to assert his right to be accounted the writer of these novels.

'I enclose a note to Mr. Guthrie Wright, who will deliver to you some others of those MSS. which were in poor Lord Kinnedder's possession; and a few more now at Abbotsford, which I can send in a day or two, will, I think, nearly complete the whole, though there may be some leaves missing.

'I hope you are not the worse of our very merry party yesterday.—Ever yours truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

Various passages in Scott's correspondence have recalled to my recollection the wonder with which the friends best acquainted with the extent of his usual engagements observed, about this period, his readiness in mixing himself up with the business of associations far different from the Bannatyne Club. I cannot doubt that his conduct as President of the Royal Society, and as manager of the preparations for the King's visit, had a main influence in this matter. In both of these capacities he had been thrown into contact with many of the most eminent of his fellow-citizens, who had previously seen little of him personally—including several, and those of especial consequence, who had been accustomed to flavour all their notions of him with something of the gall of local partisanship in politics. The inimitable mixture of sagacity, discretion, and gentleness, which characterised all his intercourse with mankind, was soon appreciated by the gentlemen to whom I allude; for not a few of them had had abundant opportunities of observing and lamenting the ease with which ill humours are engendered, to the disturbance of all really useful discussion, wherever social equals assemble in conclave, without having some official preses, uniting the weight of strong and quick intellect, with the calmness and moderation of a brave spirit, and the conciliating grace of habitual courtesy.

No man was ever more admirably qualified to contend with the difficulties of such a situation. Presumption, dogmatism, and arrogance, shrunk from the overawing contrast of his modest greatness: the poison of every little passion was shamed and neutralized beneath the charitable dignity of his penetration: and jealousy, fretfulness, and spleen, felt themselves transmuted in the placid atmosphere of good sense, good humour, and good manners. And whoever might be apt to plead off on the score of harassing and engrossing personal duty of any sort, Scott had always leisure as well as temper at command, when invited to take part in any business connected with any rational hope of public advantage. These things opened, like the discovery of some new and precious element of wealth, upon certain eager spirits who considered the Royal Society as the great local parent and minister of practical inventions and mechanical improvements; and they found it no hard matter to inspire their genial chief with a warm sympathy in not a few of their then predominant speculations. He was invited, for example, to place himself at the head of a new company for improving the manufacture of oil gas, and in the spring of this year began to officiate regularly in that capacity. Other associations of a like kind called for his countenance, and received it. The fame of his ready zeal and happy demeanour grew and spread; and from this time, until bodily infirmities disabled him, Sir Walter occupied, as the most usual, acceptable, and successful chairman of public meetings of almost every conceivable sort, apart from politics, a very prominent place among the active citizens of his native town. Any foreign student of statistics who should have happened to peruse the files of an Edinburgh newspaper for the period to which I allude, would, I think, have concluded that there must be at least two Sir Walter Scotts in the place—one the miraculously fertile author whose works occupied two-thirds of its literary advertisements and critical columns—another some retired magistrate or senator of easy fortune and indefatigable philanthropy, who devoted the rather

oppressive leisure of an honourable old age to the promotion of patriotic ameliorations, the watchful guardianship of charities, and the ardent patronage of educational institutions.

The reader will perceive in the correspondence to which I must return, hints about various little matters connected with Scott's own advancing edifice on Tweedside, in which he may trace the President of the Royal Society, and the Chairman of the Gas Company.

Thus, on the 14th of February, he recurs to the plan of heating interiors by steam—and proceeds with other topics of a similar class :—

'*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

'DEAR TERRY—I will not fail to send Mr. Atkinson, so soon as I can get it, a full account of Mr. Holdsworth of Glasgow's improved use of steam, which is in great acceptation. Being now necessarily sometimes with men of science, I hear a great deal of these matters; and, like Don Diego Snapshorto with respect to Greek, though I do not understand them, I like the sound of them. I have got a capital stove (proved and exercised by Mr. Robison,[1] who is such a mechanical genius as his father, the celebrated professor) for the lower part of the house, with a communication for ventilating in the summer. Moreover, I have got for one or two of the rooms a new sort of bell, which I think would divert you. There is neither wire nor crank of any kind; the whole consisting of a tube of tin, such as is used for gas, having at one extremity a cylinder of wider dimensions, and in the other a piece of light wood. The larger cylinder—suppose an inch and a half in diameter—terminates in the apartment, and, ornamented as you please, is the handle, as it were, of the bell. By pressing a piston down into this upper and wider cylinder, the air through the tube, to a distance of a

[1] Now Sir John Robison, son of the author of 'Elements of Mechanical Philosophy,' etc. He is Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.—[1839.]

hundred feet if necessary, is suddenly compressed, which compression throws out the light piece of wood, which strikes the bell. The power of compression is exactly like that of the Bramah patent—the acting element being air instead of water. The bell may act as a telegraph by sinking once, twice, thrice, or so forth. The great advantage, however, is, that it never can go out of order—needs no cranks, or pulleys, or wires—and can be contorted into any sort of twining or turning which convenience of communication may require, being simply an air-tight tube. It might be used to communicate with the stable, and I think of something of that kind—with the porter's lodge—with the gardener's house. I have a model now in the room with me. The only thing I have not explained is, that a small spring raises the piston B when pressed down. I wish you would show this to Mr. Atkinson: if he has not seen it, he will be delighted. I have tried it on a tube of fifty feet, and it never fails, indeed *cannot*. It may be called the *ne plus ultra* of bell-ringing—the pea-gun principle, as one may say. As the bell is stationary, it might be necessary (were more than one used) that a little medallion should be suspended in such a manner as to be put in vibration, so as to show the servant which bell has been struck.—I think we have spoke of well-nigh all the commodities wanted at Conundrum Castle worth mentioning. Still there are the carpets.

'I have no idea my present labours will be dramatic in situation: as to character, that of Louis XI., the sagacious, perfidious, superstitious, jocular, and politic tyrant, would be, for a historical chronicle, containing *his life and death*, one of the most powerful ever brought on the stage.—Yours truly, W. Scott.'

A few weeks later, he says to the same correspondent —'I must not omit to tell you that my gas establishment is in great splendour, and working, now that the expense of the apparatus is in a great measure paid, very easily and very cheaply. In point of economy, however, it is

not so effective; for the facility of procuring it encourages to a great profusion of light: but then a gallon of the basest train-oil, which is used for preference, makes a hundred feet of gas, and treble that quantity lights the house in the state of illumination for the expense of about 3s. 6d. In our new mansion we should have been ruined with spermaceti oil and wax-candles, yet had not one-tenth part of the light. Besides, we are entirely freed from the great plague of cleaning lamps, etc. There is no smell whatever, unless a valve is left open, and the gas escapes unconsumed, in which case the scent occasions its being instantly discovered. About twice a week the gas is made by an ordinary labourer, under occasional inspection of the gardener. It takes about five hours to fill the reservoir gasometer. I never saw an invention more completely satisfactory in the results.'

I cannot say that Sir Walter's 'century of inventions' at Abbotsford turned out very happily. His new philosophical *ne plus ultra* of bells was found in the sequel a poor succedaneum for the old-fashioned mechanism of the simple wire; and his application of gas-light to the interior of a dwelling-house was in fact attended with so many inconveniences, that erelong all his family heartily wished it had never been thought of. Moreover, Sir Walter had deceived himself as to the expense of such an apparatus when maintained for the uses of a single domestic establishment. He easily made out that his gas *per se* cost him less than the wax, oil, and tallow, requisite to produce an equal quantity of light, would have done; but though he admitted that no such quantity of artificial light was necessary either for comfort or splendour, nor would ever have been dreamt of had its supply been to come from the chandler's store, 'the state of an illumination' was almost constantly kept up. Above all, he seems to have, by some trickery of the imagination, got rid in his estimate of all memory of the very considerable sum expended on the original fabric and furnishing of his gasometer, and lining wall upon wall with so many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of feet of delicate pipe work,—and, in like

manner, to have counted for nothing the fact that he had a workman of superior character employed during no slender portion of every year in the manufacture. He himself, as has been mentioned before, delighted at all times in a strong light, and was not liable to much annoyance from the delicacy of his olfactory nerves. To the extremes of heat and cold, too, he was nearly indifferent. But the blaze and glow, and occasional odour of gas, when spread over every part of a private house, will ever constitute a serious annoyance for the majority of men—still more so of women—and in a country place, where skilful repair, in case of accident, cannot be immediately procured, the result is often a misery. The effect of the new apparatus in the dining-room at Abbotsford was at first superb. In sitting down to table, in Autumn, no one observed that in each of three chandeliers (one of them being of very great dimensions) there lurked a little tiny bead of red light. Dinner passed off, and the sun went down, and suddenly, at the turning of a screw, the room was filled with a gush of splendour worthy of the palace of Aladdin; but, as in the case of Aladdin, the old lamp would have been better in the upshot. Jewelry sparkled, but cheeks and lips looked cold and wan in this fierce illumination; and the eye was wearied, and the brow ached, if the sitting was at all protracted. I confess, however, that my chief enmity to the whole affair arises from my conviction that Sir Walter's own health was damaged, in his latter years, in consequence of his habitually working at night under the intense and burning glare of a broad star of gas, which hung, as it were, in the air, immediately over his writing-table.

These philosophical novelties were combined with curiously heterogeneous features of decoration;—*e.g.*—

'*To the Lord Montagu, etc., Ditton Park, Windsor.*

'EDINBURGH, *February* 20, 1823.

'MY DEAR LORD—I want a little sketch of your Lordship's arms, on the following account:—You are to

know that I have a sort of entrance-gallery, in which I intend to hang up my old armour, at least the heavier parts of it, with sundry skins, horns, and such-like affairs. That the two windows may be in unison, I intend to sport a little painted glass, and as I think heraldry is always better than any other subject, I intend that the upper compartment of each window shall have the shield, supporters, etc., of one of the existing dignitaries of the clan of Scott; and, of course, the Duke's arms and your Lordship's will occupy two such posts of distinction. The corresponding two will be Harden's and Thirlestane's,[1] the only families now left who have a right to be regarded as chieftains; and the lower compartments of each window will contain eight shields (without accompaniments), of good gentlemen of the name, of whom I can still muster sixteen bearing separate coats of arms. There is a little conceit in all this, but I have long got beyond the terror of

> Lord, what will all the people say!
> Mr. Mayor, Mr. Mayor?

and, like an obstinate old-fashioned Scotchman, I buckle my belt my ain gate,—and so I will have my *Bellenden*[2] *windows*.—Ever yours faithfully, WALTER SCOTT.'

The following letter, addressed to the same nobleman at his seat in the New Forest, opens with a rather noticeable paragraph. He is anxious that the guardian of Buccleuch should not omit the opportunity of adding another farm in Dumfriesshire, to an estate which already covered the best part of three or four counties!

[1] Lord Napier has his peerage, as well as the corresponding surname, from a female ancestor; in the male blood he is *Scott, Baronet of Thirlestane*—and indeed some antiquaries of no mean authority consider him as now the male representative of Buccleuch. I need not remind the reader that both Harden and Thirlestane make a great figure in the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

[2] *Bellenden* was the old war-cry of Buccleuch.

'*To the Lord Montagu, etc., etc., Beaulieu Abbey, Hants.*

'*June 18th*, 1823.

'MY DEAR LORD—Your kind letter reached me just when, with my usual meddling humour, I was about to poke your Lordship on the subject of the farm near Drumlanrig. I see officially that the upset price is reduced. Now, surely you will not let it slip you: the other lots have all gone higher than valuation, so, therefore, it is to be supposed the estimation cannot be very much out of the way, and surely, as running absolutely into sight of that fine castle, it should be the Duke's at all events. Think of a vile four-cornered house, with plantations laid out after the fashion of scollops (as the women call them) and pocket-handkerchiefs, cutting and disfiguring the side of the hill, in constant view. The small property has a tendency to fall into the great one, as the small drop of water, as it runs down the pane of a carriage-window, always joins the larger. But this may not happen till we are all dead and gone; and N O W are three important letters of the alphabet, mighty slippery, and apt to escape the grasp.

'I was much interested by your Lordship's account of Beaulieu; I have seen it from the water, and admired it very much, but I remember being told an evil genius haunted it in the shape of a low fever, to which the inhabitants were said to be subject. The woods were the most noble I ever saw. The disappearance of the ancient monastic remains may be accounted for on the same principle as elsewhere—a desire of the grantees of the Crown to secularize the appearance of the property, and remove at least the external evidence that it had ever been dedicated to religious uses—pretty much on the principle on which the light-fingered gentry melt plate so soon as it comes into their possession, and give the original metal a form which renders it more difficult to reassume it—this is a most unsavoury simile. The various mutations in religion, and consequently in property of this kind, re-

commended such policy. Your Lordship cannot but remember the Earl of Pembroke, in Edward the Sixth's time, expelling the nuns from Wilton—then in Queen Mary's reinducting them into their nunnery, himself meeting the abbess, barefooted and in sackcloth, in penance for his sacrilege—and finally, again turning the said abbess and her vassals adrift in the days of good Queen Bess, with the wholesome admonition—"Go spin, you jades, go spin." Something like the system of demolition which probably went on during these uncertain times, was practised by what was called in France La Bande Noire, who bought chateaux and abbeys, and pulling them down, sold the materials for what they would bring—which was sometimes sufficient to help well towards payment of the land, when the assignats were at an immense depreciation.

'I should like dearly to have your Lordship's advice about what I am now doing here, knowing you to be one of those

Who in trim gardens take their pleasure.[1]

I am shutting my house in with a court-yard, the interior of which is to be laid out around the drive in flower-plots and shrubbery, besides a trellised walk. This I intend to connect with my gardens, and obtain, if possible, something (*parvum componere magnis*) like the comfort of Ditton, so preferable to the tame and poor waste of grass and gravel by which modern houses are surrounded. I trust to see you all here in autumn.—Ever yours faithfully,

'W. Scott.'

In answering the foregoing letter, Lord Montagu mentioned to Scott the satisfaction he had recently had in placing his nephew the Duke of Buccleuch under the care of Mr. Blakeney, an accomplished gentleman and old friend, who had been his own fellow-student at Cambridge. He also rallied the poet a little on his yearning for acres; and hinted that that craving is apt to draw inconveniently even on a ducal revenue. Scott says in reply—

[1] Milton's *Il Penseroso*, ver. 50.

To the Lord Montagu, etc. etc.

'My dear Lord—I am delighted that you have got such a tutor for Walter as entirely satisfies a person so well acquainted with mankind as your Lordship; and I am not afraid that a friend of yours should be imbued with any of very dangerous qualities, which are sometimes found in the instructors placed around our noble youths. Betwixt a narrow-minded pedantry, which naturally disgusts a young man, and the far more formidable vices of flattery, assentation, and self-seeking of all kinds, there are very few of the class of men who are likely to adopt the situation of tutor, that one is not afraid to trust near the person of a boy of rank and fortune. I think it is an argument of your friend's good sense and judgment, that he thinks the knowledge of domestic history essential to his pupil. It is in fact the accomplishment which, of all others, comes most home to the business and breast of a public man—and the Duke of Buccleuch can never be regarded as a private one. Besides, it has, in a singular degree, the tendency to ripen men's judgment upon the wild political speculations now current. Any one who will read Clarendon with attention and patience, may regard, *veluti in speculo*, the form and pressure of our own times, if you will just place the fanaticism of atheism and irreligion instead of that of enthusiasm, and combine it with the fierce thirst after innovation proper to both ages. Men of very high rank are, I have noticed, in youth peculiarly accessible to the temptations held out to their inexperience by the ingenious arguers upon speculative politics. There is popularity to be obtained by listening to these lecturers—there is also an idea of generosity, and independence, and public spirit, in affecting to hold cheap the privileges which are peculiarly their own—and there may spring in some minds the idea (a very vain one) that the turret would seem higher, and more distinguished, if some parts of the building that overtop it were pulled down. I have no doubt Mr. Blackeney is aware of all this, and will take his own time and manner in leading

our young friend to draw from history, in his own way, inferences which may apply to his own times. I will consider anxiously what your Lordship mentions about a course of Scottish study. We are still but very indifferently provided with Scotch histories of a general description.[1] Lord Hailes' Annals are the foundation-stone, and an excellent book, though dryly written. Pinkerton, in two very unreadable quartos, which yet abound in information, takes up the thread where Hailes drops it—and then you have Robertson, down to the Union of the crowns. But I would beware of task-work, which Pinkerton at least must always be, and I would relieve him every now and then by looking at the pages of old Pitscottie, where events are told with so much *naïveté*, and even humour, and such individuality as it were, that it places the actors and scenes before the reader. The whole history of James V. and Queen Mary may be read to great advantage in the elegant Latin of Lesly, Bishop of Ross, and collated with the account which his opponent Buchanan, in language still more classical, gives of the same eventful reigns. Laing is but a bad guide through the seventeenth century, yet I hardly know where a combined account of these events is to be had, so far as Scotland is concerned, and still less where we could recommend to the young Duke an account of Scottish jurisprudence that is not too technical. All this I will be happy to talk over with your Lordship; for that our young friend should possess this information in a general way is essential to his own comfort and the welfare of many.

'About the land I have no doubt your Lordship is

[1] See some remarks on the Scottish historians in Sir Walter's reviewal of the first and second volumes of Mr. P. F. Tytler's elaborate work—a work which he had meant to criticize throughout in similar detail, for he considered it as a very important one in itself, and had, moreover, a warm regard for the author—the son of his early friend Lord Woodhouselee. His own Tales of a Grandfather have, however unambitiously undertaken, supplied a more just and clear guide of Scottish history to the general reader, than any one could have pointed out at the time when this letter was addressed to Lord Montagu.

quite right, but I have something of what is called the *yeard hunger*.[1] I daresay you will get the other lots *à bon marché*, when you wish to have them; and, to be sure, a ducal dignity is a monstrous beast for devouring ready cash. I do not fear, on the part of Duke Walter, those ills which might arise to many from a very great command of ready money, which sometimes makes a young man, like a horse too full of spirits, make too much play at starting, and flag afterwards. I think improvident expenditure will not be his fault, though I have no doubt he will have the generous temper of his father and grandfather, with more means to indulge an expense which has others for its object more than mere personal gratification. This I venture to foretell, and hope to see the accomplishment of my prophecy: few things could give me more pleasure.

'My court-yard rises, but masons, of all men but lovers, love the most to linger ere they depart. Two men are now tapping upon the summit of my gate as gently as if they were laying the foundation-stone of a Methodist meeting-house, and one plumber "sits, sparrow-like, companionless,"[2] upon the top of a turret which should have been finished a month since. I must go, and, as Judge Jefferies used to express it, give them a lick with the rough side of my tongue, which will relieve your Lordship sooner than might otherwise have been.

'Melrose is looking excellently well. I begin to think taking off the old roof would have hurt it, at least externally, by diminishing its effect on the eye. The lowering the roofs of the aisles has had a most excellent effect. Sir Adam is well, and his circle augmented by his Indian brother, Major Fergusson, who has much of the family manners—an excellent importation, of course, to Tweedside.—Ever yours truly, W. Scott.'

[1] '*Yerd-hunger*—that keen desire of food which is sometimes manifested by persons before death, viewed as a presage that the *yerd*, or grave, is calling for them as its prey.'—*Jamieson's Dictionary, Supplement.*

[2] Psalm cii. ver. 7.

In April of this year, Sir Walter heard of the death of his dear brother Thomas Scott, whose son had been for two years domesticated with him at Abbotsford, and the rest of that family were soon afterwards his guests for a considerable time. Among other visitants of the same season were Miss Edgeworth, and her sisters Harriet and Sophia. After spending a few weeks in Edinburgh, and making a tour into the Highlands, they gave a fortnight to Abbotsford; and thenceforth the correspondence between Scott and the most distinguished of contemporary novelists, was of that confiding and affectionate character which we have seen largely exemplified in his intercourse with Joanna Baillie. His first impressions of his new friend are given in this letter to Mr. Terry.

'*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

'CASTLE STREET, *June* 18, 1823.

My marbles! my marbles! O what must now be done?
My drawing-room is finish'd off, but marbles there are none.
My marbles! my marbles! I fancied them so fine,
The marbles of Lord Elgin were but a joke to mine.[1]

'In fact we are all on tip-toe now for the marbles and the chimney-grates, which being had and obtained, we will be less clamorous about other matters. I have very little news to send you: Miss Edgeworth is at present the great lioness of Edinburgh, and a very nice lioness; she is full of fun and spirit; a little slight figure, very active in her motions, very good-humoured, and full of enthusiasm. Your descriptions of the chiffonieres made my mouth water: but Abbotsford has cost rather too much for one year, with the absolutely necessary expenses, and I like to leave something to succeeding years, when we may be better able to afford to get our matters made tasty. Besides, the painting of the house should be executed before much curious furniture be put in; next

[1] Sir Walter is parodying the Spanish Ballad 'My ear-rings! my ear-rings are dropt into the well,' etc.

spring, perhaps, we may go prowling together through the brokers' purlieus. I enclose you a plan of my own for a gallery round my own room, which is to combine that advantage with a private staircase at the same time, leaving me possession of my oratory; this will be for next year—but I should like to take Mr. Atkinson's sentiments about it. Somebody told me, I trust inaccurately, that he had not been well. I have not heard of him for some time, and I owe him (besides much kindness which can only be paid with gratitude) the suitable compensation for his very friendly labours in my behalf. I wish you would poke him a little, with all delicacy, on this subject. We are richer than when Abbotsford first began, and have engrossed a great deal of his most valuable time. I think you will understand the plan perfectly. A private staircase comes down from my dressing-room, and opens upon a book-gallery; the landing-place forms the top of the oratory, leaving that cabinet seven feet high; then there is a staircase in the closet which corresponds with the oratory, which you attain by walking round the gallery. This staircase might be made to hang on the door and pull out when it is opened, which is the way abroad with an *escalier derobé*.[1] I might either put shelves under the gallery, or place some of my cabinets there, or partly both.—Kind compliments to Mrs. Terry, in which all join. Yours most truly, W. Scott.

'*P.S.*—The quantity of horns that I have for the hall would furnish the whole world of cuckoldom; arrived this instant a new cargo of them, Lord knows from whence. I opened the box, thinking it might be the damask, and found it full of sylvan spoils. Has an old-fashioned consulting desk ever met your eye in your rambles? I mean one of those which have four faces, each forming an inclined plane, like a writing-desk, and

[1] Sir Walter had in his mind a favourite cabinet of Napoleon's at the *Elysée Bourbon*, where there are a gallery and concealed staircase such as he here describes.

made to turn round as well as to rise, and be depressed by a strong iron screw in the centre, something like a one-clawed table; they are old-fashioned, but choicely convenient, as you can keep three or four books, folios if you like, open for reference. If you have not seen one, I can get one made to a model in the Advocates' Library. Some sort of contrivances there are, too, for displaying prints, all which would be convenient in so large a room, but can be got in time.'

CHAPTER LIX

Quentin Durward published—Transactions with Constable—Dialogues on Superstition proposed—Article on Romance written—St. Ronan's Well begun—'Melrose in July'—Abbotsford visited by Miss Edgeworth, and by Mr. Adolphus—His Memoranda—Excursion to Allanton—Anecdotes—Letters to Miss Baillie, Miss Edgeworth, Mr. Terry, etc.—Publication of St. Ronan's Well.

1823

A DAY or two after the date of the preceding letter, Quentin Durward was published; and surpassing as its popularity was eventually, Constable, who was in London at the time, wrote in cold terms of its immediate reception.

Very shortly before the bookseller left Edinburgh for that trip, he had concluded another bargain (his last of the sort) for the purchase of Waverley copyrights—acquiring the author's property in The Pirate, Nigel, Peveril, and also Quentin Durward, out and out, at the price of five thousand guineas. He had thus paid for the copyright of novels (over and above the half profits of the early separate editions) the sum of £22,500; and his advances upon 'works of fiction' still in embryo, amounted at this moment to £10,000 more. He began, in short, and the wonder is that he began so late, to suspect that the process of creation was moving too rapidly. The publication of different sets of the novels in a collective form may probably have had a share in opening his eyes to the fact, that the voluminousness of

an author is anything but favourable to the rapid diffusion of his works as library books—the great object with any publisher who aspires at founding a solid fortune. But he merely intimated on this occasion that he thought the pecuniary transactions between Scott and himself had gone to such an extent, that, considering the usual chances of life and health, he must decline contracting for any more novels until those already bargained for should have been written.

Scott himself appears to have admitted for a moment the suspicion that he had been overdoing in the field of romance; and opened to Constable the scheme of a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue, for which he had long possessed ample materials in his thorough mastery of perhaps the most curious library of *diablerie* that ever man collected. But before Constable had leisure to consider this proposal in all its bearings, Quentin Durward, from being, as Scott expressed it, *frost-bit*, had emerged into most fervid and flourishing life. In fact, the sensation which this novel, on its first appearance, created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original Waverley in Edinburgh, and Ivanhoe afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI. and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. Germany had been fully awake to his merits years before, but the public there also felt their sympathies appealed to with hitherto unmatched strength and effect. The infection of admiration ran far and wide on the Continent, and soon reacted most potently upon Britain. Discussing the various fortunes of these novels a few years after, Mr. Senior says—

> Almost all the characters in his other novels are drawn from British history or from British domestic life. That they should delight nations differing so much from ourselves and from one another

in habits and in literary taste, who cannot appreciate the imitation of our existing manners, or join in our historical associations; that the head of 'Le Sieur Valtere Skote' should be pointed out by a Hungarian tradesman as the portrait of 'l'homme le plus célèbre en l'Europe'; that his works should employ the translators and printers of Leipsic and Paris, and even relieve the ennui of a Rothenturn quarantine on the extreme borders of European civilization, is, as Dr. Walsh [1] has well observed, the strongest proof that their details are founded on deep knowledge of the human character, and of the general feelings recognised by all. But Quentin Durward has the additional advantage of scenery and characters possessing European interest. It presents to the inhabitants of the Netherlands and of France, the most advanced of the continental nations, a picture of the manners of their ancestors, incomparably more vivid and more detailed than is to be found in any other narrative, either fictitious or real: and that picture is dignified by the introduction of persons whose influence has not even yet ceased to operate.

Perhaps at no time did the future state of Europe depend more on the conduct of two individuals than when the crown of France and the coronet of Burgundy descended on Louis XI. and Charles the Bold. The change from real to nominal sovereignty, which has since been the fate of the empire of Germany, was then impending over the kingdom of France. And if that throne had been filled at this critical period, by a monarch with less courage, less prudence, or more scrupulous than Louis, there seems every reason to suppose that the great feudatories would have secured their independence, and the greater part of that country might now be divided into many petty principalities, some Catholic, and some Protestant, principally intent on excluding each other's commodities, and preventing the mutual ruin which would have been predicted as the necessary consequence of a free trade between Gascony and Languedoc.

On the other hand, if the race of excellent sovereigns who governed Burgundy for a hundred and twenty years had been continued—or indeed, if Duke Philip had been followed by almost any other person than his brutal son, the rich and extensive countries, which under his reign constituted the most powerful state in Europe, must soon have been formed into an independent monarchy—a monarchy far greater and better consolidated than the artificial kingdom lately built up out of their fragments, and kept together rather by the pressure of surrounding Europe than by any internal principles of cohesion.[2] From the times of Louis XI. until now, France has been the master-spring in European politics, and Flanders merely an arena for combat. The imagination is bewildered by an attempt to speculate on the course which human affairs might have

[1] See Walsh's Journey to Constantinople.

[2] This criticism was published (in the London Review) long before the revolt of Brussels, in 1830, divided Belgium from Holland.

taken if the commencement of the fifteenth century had found the Low Countries, Burgundy, and Artois one great kingdom, and Normandy, Brittany, Provence, and the other fiefs of the French crown independent principalities.

In addition to their historical interest, Sir Walter had the good fortune to find in Charles and Louis characters as well contrasted as if they had been invented for the purposes of fiction. Both were indeed utterly selfish, but there the resemblance ends. The Duke's ruling principle was vanity, and vanity of the least intellectual kind. His first object was the fame of a conqueror, or rather of a soldier, for in his battles he seems to have aimed more at showing courage and personal strength than the calmness and combination of a general. His other great source of delight was the exhibition of his wealth and splendour,—in the pomp of his dress and his retinue. In these ignoble pursuits he seems to have been utterly indifferent to the sufferings he inflicted on others, and to the risks he himself encountered; and ultimately threw away his life, his army, and the prosperity of his country, in a war undertaken without any object, for he was attacking those who were anxious to be his auxiliaries, and persevered in after success was impossible, merely to postpone the humiliation of a retreat.

Louis's object was power; and he seems to have enjoyed the rare felicity of being unaffected by vanity. He had both intrepidity and conduct in battle—far more of the latter indeed than his ferocious rival; but no desire to display these qualities led him into war, if his objects could be otherwise obtained. He fought those only whom he could not bribe or deceive. The same indifference to mere opinion entitled him to Commines' praise as 'eminently wise in adversity.' When it was not expedient to resist, he could retreat, concede, and apologize, without more apparent humiliation than the king in chess when he moves out of check. He was rapacious, because wealth is a source of power, and because he had no sympathy with those whom he impoverished; but he did not, like his rival, waste his treasures on himself, or on his favourites—he employed them either in the support of his own real force, or in keeping in his pay the ministers and favourites of other sovereigns, and sometimes the sovereigns themselves. His only personal expense was in providing for the welfare of his soul, which he conciliated with his unscrupulous ambition, by allowing the saints, his intercessors, a portion of his spoils. Our author's picture of his superstition may appear at first sight overcharged, but the imaginary prayer ascribed to him is scarcely a caricature of his real address to Notre Dame de Clery, which we copy in Brantome's antiquated spelling—

Ah, ma bonne Dame, ma petite Maistresse, ma grande ame, en qui j'ay eu tousjours mon reconfort. Je te prie de supplier Dieu pour moy, et estre mon advocate envers luy, qu'il me pardonne la mort de mon frere—que j'ay fait empoisonner par se meschant Abbé de S. Jean. Je m'en confesse a toi, comme à ma bonne patronne et maistresse. Mais aussi, qu'eusse-je sceu faire? Il ne me faisoit que troubler mon royaume. Fay moy doncques pardonner, ma bonne Dame; *et je sçay ce que je te donneray.*

Sir Walter has made good use of these excellent materials. His Louis and his Charles are perfectly faithful copies, with all the spirit and consistency which even *he* could have given to creations of his own. The narrative, too, is flowing and connected: each event depends on that which preceded it, without any of the episodes, recapitulations, and sudden changes of scene, which in many of his works weaken the interest and distract the attention of the reader.

The result of Quentin Durward, as regards the contemporary literature of France, and thence of Italy and the Continent generally, would open a field for ample digression. As concerns Scott himself, the rays of foreign enthusiasm speedily thawed the frost of Constable's unwonted misgivings; the Dialogues on Superstition, if he ever began them, were very soon dropped, and the Novelist resumed his pen. He had not sunk under the short-lived frown—for he wrote to Ballantyne, on first ascertaining that a damp was thrown on his usual manufacture,

> The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
> Can never be a mouse of any soul;

and, while his publisher yet remained irresolute as to the plan of Dialogues, threw off, with unabated energy, his excellent Essay on Romance, for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica; and I cannot but consider it as another display of his high self-reliance, that, though he well knew to what influence Quentin owed its ultimate success in the British market, he, the instant he found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, sprang back to Scotland—nay, voluntarily encountered new difficulties, by selecting the comparatively tame and unpicturesque realities of modern manners in his native province.

A conversation, which much interested me at the time, had, I fancy, some share at least in this determination. As he, Laidlaw, and myself were lounging on our ponies, one fine calm afternoon, along the brow of the Eildon hill where it overhangs Melrose, he mentioned to us gaily the *row*, as he called it, that was going on in Paris about

Quentin Durward, and said, 'I can't but think that I could make better play still with something German.' Laidlaw grumbled at this, and said, like a true Scotchman, 'Na, na, sir—take my word for it, you are always best, like Helen MacGregor, when your foot is on your native heath; and I have often thought that if you were to write a novel, and lay the scene *here* in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself.'—'Hame's hame,' quoth Scott, smiling, 'be it ever sae hamely. There's something in what you say, Willie. What suppose I were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?'—'The very thing I want,' says Laidlaw; 'stick to Melrose in July 1823.'—'Well, upon my word,' he answered, 'the field would be quite wide enough—and *what for no?*'—(This pet phrase of Meg Dods was a *Laidlawism.*)—Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect; but as Laidlaw and I talked and laughed over our worthy neighbours, his air became graver and graver; and he at length said, 'Ay, ay, if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials enow for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say there is some real romance at this moment going on down there, that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains.' He then told us a tale of dark domestic guilt which had recently come under his notice as Sheriff, and of which the scene was not Melrose, but a smaller hamlet on the other side of the Tweed, full in our view; but the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon;—anything more dreadful was never conceived by Crabbe, and he told it so as to produce on us who listened all the effect of another *Hall of Justice.* It could never have entered into his head to elaborate such a tale; but both Laidlaw and I used to think that this talk suggested St. Ronan's Well —though my good friend was by no means disposed to accept that as payment in full of his demand, and from

time to time afterwards would give the Sheriff a little poking about 'Melrose in July.'

Before Sir Walter settled to the new novel, he received Joanna Baillie's long-promised Collection of Poetical Miscellanies, in which appeared his own dramatic sketch of Macduff's Cross. When Halidon Hill first came forth, there were not wanting reviewers who hailed it in a style of rapture, such as might have been expected had it been a Macbeth. But this folly soon sunk; and I only mention it as an instance of the extent to which reputation bewilders and confounds even persons who have good brains enough when they find it convenient to exercise them. The second attempt of the class produced no sensation whatever at the time; and both would have been long since forgotten, but that they came from Scott's pen. They both contain some fine passages—Halidon Hill has, indeed, several grand ones. But, on the whole, they always seemed to me most egregiously unworthy of Sir Walter; and, now that we have before us his admirable letters on dramatic composition to Allan Cunningham, it appears doubly hard to account for the rashness with which he committed himself in even such slender attempts on a species of composition, of which, in his cool hour, he so fully appreciated the difficult demands. Nevertheless, I am very far from agreeing with those critics who have gravely talked of Halidon Hill and Macduff's Cross, and the still more unfortunate Doom of Devorgoil, as proving that Sir Walter could not have succeeded in the drama, either serious or comic. It would be as fair to conclude, from the abortive fragment of the Vampyre, that Lord Byron could not have written a good novel or romance in prose. Scott threw off these things *currente calamo*; he never gave himself time to consider beforehand what could be made of their materials, nor bestowed a moment on correcting them after he had covered the allotted quantity of paper with blank verse; and neither when they were new, nor ever after, did he seem to attach the slightest importance to them.

Miss Baillie's volume contained several poems by Mrs. Hemans,—some *jeux d'esprit* by the late Miss Catherine Fanshawe, a woman of rare wit and genius, in whose society Scott greatly delighted,—and, *inter alia*, Mr. William Howison's early ballad of Polydore, which had been originally published, under Scott's auspices, in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810.

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, *July* 11, 1823.

'Your kind letter, my dear friend, heaps coals of fire on my head, for I should have written to you, in common gratitude, long since; but I waited till I should read through the Miscellany with some attention, which, as I have not yet done, I can scarce say much to the purpose, so far as that is concerned. My own production sate in the porch like an evil thing, and scared me from proceeding farther than to hurry through your compositions, with which I was delighted, and two or three others. In my own case, I have almost a nervous reluctance to look back on any recent poetical performance of my own. I may almost say with Macbeth,—

> I am afraid to think what I have done;
> Look on't again I dare not.

But the best of the matter is, that your purpose has been so satisfactorily answered—and great reason have you to be proud of your influence with the poem-buyers as well as the poem-makers. By the by, you know your request first set me a-hammering on an old tale of the Swintons, from whom, by the mother's side, I am descended, and the tinkering work I made of it warmed the heart of a cousin[1] in the East Indies, a descendant of the renowned Sir Allan, who has sent his kindred poet by this fleet—not a butt of sack, but a pipe of most particular Madeira. You and Mrs. Agnes shall have a glass of it when you

[1] George Swinton, Esq. (now of Swinton), was at this time Secretary to the Council in Bengal.

come to Abbotsford, for I always consider your last only a payment to account—you did not stay half the time you promised. I am going out there on Friday, and shall see all my family reunited around me for the first time these many years. They make a very good figure as "honest men and bonny lasses." I read Miss Fanshawe's pieces, which are quite beautiful. Mrs. Hemans is somewhat too poetical for my taste—too many flowers I mean, and too little fruit—but that may be the cynical criticism of an elderly gentleman; for it is certain that when I was young, I read verses of every kind with infinitely more indulgence, because with more pleasure than I can now do—the more shame for me now to refuse the complaisance which I have had so often to solicit. I am hastening to think prose a better thing than verse, and if you have any hopes to convince me to the contrary, it must be by writing and publishing another volume of plays as fast as possible. I think they would be most favourably received; and beg, like Burns, to

> tell you of mine and Scotland's drouth,
> Your servant's humble———

A young friend of mine, Lord Francis Gower, has made a very fair attempt to translate Goethe's untranslatable play of Faust, or Faustus. He has given also a version of Schiller's very fine poem on Casting the Bell, which I think equals Mr. Sotheby's—nay, privately (for tell it not in Epping Forest, whisper it not in Hampstead), rather outdoes our excellent friend. I have not compared them minutely, however. As for Mr. Howison, such is the worldly name of Polydore, I never saw such a change in my life upon a young man. It may be fourteen years, or thereabouts, since he introduced himself to me, by sending me some most excellent verses for a youth of sixteen years old. I asked him to Ashestiel, and he came —a thin hectic youth, with an eye of dark fire, a cheek that coloured on the slightest emotion, and a mind fraught with feeling of the tender and the beautiful, and

eager for poetical fame—otherwise, of so little acquaintance with the world and the world's ways, that a sucking-turkey might have been his tutor. I was rather a bear-like nurse for such a lamb-like charge. We could hardly indeed associate together, for I was then eternally restless, and he as sedentary. He could neither fish, shoot nor course—he could not bear the inside of a carriage with the ladies, for it made him sick, nor the outside with my boys, for it made him giddy. He could not walk, for it fatigued him, nor ride, for he fell off. I did all I could to make him happy, and it was not till he had caught two colds and one sprain, besides risking his life in the Tweed, that I gave up all attempts to convert him to the things of this world. Our acquaintance after this languished, and at last fell asleep, till one day last year I met at Lockhart's a thin consumptive-looking man, bent double with study, and whose eyes seemed to have been extinguished almost by poring over the midnight lamp, though protected by immense green spectacles. I then found that my poet had turned metaphysician, and that these spectacles were to assist him in gazing into the millstone of moral philosophy. He looked at least twice as old as he really is, and has since published a book, very small in size, but, from its extreme abstracted doctrines, more difficult to comprehend than any I ever opened in my life.[1] I will take care he has one of my copies of the Miscellany. If he gets into the right line, he will do something remarkable yet.

'We saw, you will readily suppose, a great deal of Miss Edgeworth, and two very nice girls, her younger sisters. It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person, than that she not only completely answered, but exceeded the expectations which I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the *naïveté* and

[1] 'An Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation, and Variety. To which are added, A Key to the Mythology of the Ancients; and Europe's Likeness to the Human Spirit. By William Howison.' Edinburgh: 1822.

good-humoured ardour of mind which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation. In external appearance, she is quite the fairy of our nursery-tale, the Whippity Stourie, if you remember such a sprite, who came flying through the window to work all sorts of marvels. I will never believe but what she has a wand in her pocket, and pulls it out to conjure a little before she begins to those very striking pictures of manners. I am grieved to say, that, since they left Edinburgh on a tour to the Highlands, they have been detained at Forres by an erysipelas breaking out on Miss Edgeworth's face. They have been twelve days there, and are now returning southwards, as a letter from Harriet informs me. I hope soon to have them at Abbotsford, where we will take good care of them, and the invalid in particular. What would I give to have you and Mrs. Agnes to meet them, and what canty cracks we would set up about the days of langsyne! The increasing powers of steam, which, like you, I look on half-proud, half-sad, half-angry, and half-pleased, in doing so much for the commercial world, promise something also for the sociable; and, like Prince Houssein's tapestry, will, I think, one day waft friends together in the course of a few hours, and, for aught we may be able to tell, bring Hampstead and Abbotsford within the distance of,—"Will you dine with us quietly to-morrow?" I wish I could advance this happy abridgment of time and space, so as to make it serve my present wishes.

'ABBOTSFORD, *July* 18, ——

'I have for the first time these several years, my whole family united around me, excepting Lockhart, who is with his yeomanry, but joins us to-morrow. Walter is returned a fine steady soldier-like young man, from his abode on the Continent, and little Charles, with his friend Surtees, has come from Wales, so that we draw together from distant quarters. When you add Sophia's baby, I assure you my wife and I look very patriarchal. The misfortune is, all this must be soon over, for Walter is

admitted one of the higher class of students in the Military College, and must join against the 1st of August. I have some chance, I think, when he has had a year's study, of getting him upon the staff in the Ionian islands, which I should greatly prefer to his lounging about villages in horse-quarters; he has a strong mathematical turn, which promises to be of service in his profession. Little Charles is getting steadily on with his learning; but to what use he is to turn to, I scarce know yet.—I am very sorry indeed that the Doctor is complaining. He whose life has been one course of administering help and comfort to others, should not, one would think, suffer himself; but such are the terms on which we hold our gifts—however valuable to others, they are sometimes less available to ourselves. I sincerely hope this will find him better, and Mrs. Baillie easier in proportion. When I was subject a little to sore throats, I cured myself of that tendency by sponging my throat, breast, and shoulders every morning with the coldest water I could get; but this is rather a horse remedy, though I still keep up the practice. All here—that is, wives, maidens, and bachelors bluff, not forgetting little John Hugh, or, as he is popularly styled, Hugh Littlejohn—send loving remembrances to you and Mrs. Agnes.—Ever, dear Mrs. Joanna, most truly yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The next month—August 1823—was one of the happiest in Scott's life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there—never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway, and exclaimed, 'Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!' The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurtenances, were all but complete; and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gaiety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshields Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another, the whole party feasted by Thomas the Rhymer's waterfall in the glen—

and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's stone*. A third day we had to go further afield. He must needs show her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where 'fair hangs the apple frae the rock,'—and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined Chapel overlooking St. Mary's Loch—and he had scrambled to gather bluebells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair,—and they sang, and he recited, until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed—and the vision closed; for Miss Edgeworth never saw Abbotsford again during his life; and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

Another honoured and welcome guest of the same month was Mr. J. L. Adolphus—the author of the Letters to Heber; and I am enabled to enrich these pages with some reminiscences of that visit—the first of several he paid to Abbotsford—which this gentleman has been so kind as to set down for my use, and I am sure for the gratification of all my readers. After modestly recounting the circumstances which led to his invitation to Abbotsford, my friendly contributor says:—

'With great pleasure and curiosity, but with something like awe, I first saw this celebrated house emerge from below the plantation which screened it from the Selkirk and Melrose road. Antique as it was in design, it had not yet had time to take any tint from the weather, and its whole complication of towers, turrets, galleries, cornices, and quaintly ornamented mouldings, looked fresh from the chisel, except where the walls were enriched with some really ancient carving or inscription. As I approached the house, there was a busy sound of mason's tools; the shrubbery before the windows was strewed with the works of the carpenter and stone-cutter, and with grotesque antiquities, for which a place was yet to be found; on one side were the beginnings of a fruit and flower garden; on another, but more distant, a slope bristling with young

firs and larches; near the door murmured an unfinished fountain.

'I had seen Sir Walter Scott, but never met him in society, before this visit. He received me with all his well-known cordiality and simplicity of manner. The circumstances under which I presented myself were peculiar, as the only cause of my being under his roof was one which could not without awkwardness be alluded to, while a strict reserve existed on the subject of the Waverley novels. This, however, did not create any embarrassment; and he entered into conversation as if anything that might have been said with reference to the origin of our acquaintance had been said an hour before. I have since been present at his first reception of many visitors; and upon such occasions, as indeed upon every other, I never saw a man who, in his intercourse with all persons, was so perfect a master of courtesy. His manners were so plain and natural, and his kindness took such immediate possession of the feelings, that this excellence in him might for a while pass almost unobserved. I cannot pay a higher testimony to it than by owning that I first fully appreciated it from his behaviour to others. His air and aspect, at the moment of a first introduction, were placid, modest, and, for his time of life, venerable. Occasionally, where he stood a little on ceremony, he threw into his address a deferential tone, which had in it something of old-fashioned politeness, and became him extremely well.

'A point of hospitality in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honours of conversation. When a stranger arrived, he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table; taking care, however, by his choice of subjects, to give the visitor an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available. I have frequently observed this — with admiration both of his powers and of his discriminating kindness. To me, at the time of my first visit, he addressed himself often as to a member of his

own profession ; and indeed he seemed always to have a real pleasure in citing from his own experience as an advocate and a law officer. The first book he recommended to me for an hour's occupation in his library, was an old Scotch pamphlet of the trial of Philip Stanfield (published also in the English State Trials) ; a dismal and mysterious story of murder, connected slightly with the politics of the time of James II., and having in it a taste of the marvellous.[1]

'It would, I think, be extremely difficult to give a just idea of his general conversation to any one who had not known him. Considering his great personal and literary popularity, and the wide circle of society in which he had lived, it is perhaps remarkable that so few of his sayings, real or imputed, are in circulation. But he did not affect sayings: the points and sententious turns, which are so easily caught up and transmitted, were not natural to him: though he occasionally expressed a thought very pithily and neatly. For example, he once described the Duke of Wellington's style of debating as "slicing the argument into two or three parts, and helping himself to the best." But the great charm of his "table-talk" was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed, — always, however, guided by good sense and taste ; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions ; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described : and all that he spoke derived so much of its effect from indefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone—and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words—that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation.

'At the time of my first and second visits to Abbotsford, in 1823 and 1824, his health was less broken, and

[1] See the case of Philip Stanfield's alleged parricide, and Sir Walter Scott's remarks thereupon, in his edition of 'Lord Fountainhall's Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs,' pp. 233-36; and compare an extract from one of his early note-books, given *ante*, vol. i. p. 227.

his spirits more youthful and buoyant, than when I afterwards saw him, in the years from 1827 to 1831. Not only was he inexhaustible in anecdote, but he still loved to exert the talent of dramatizing, and in some measure representing in his own person the incidents he told of, or the situations he imagined. I recollect, for instance, his sketching in this manner (it was, I think, *apropos* to some zoological discussion with Mr. William Stewart Rose) a sailor trying to persuade a monkey to speak, and vowing, with all kinds of whimsical oaths, that he would not tell of him.[1] On the evening of my first arrival, he took me to see his "wild man," as he called him, the celebrated Tom Purdie, who was in an outhouse, unpacking some Indian idols, weapons, and carved work, just arrived from England. The better to exhibit Tom, his master played a most amusing scene of wonder, impatience, curiosity, and fear, lest anything should be broken or the candle fall into the loose hay of the packages, but all this with great submission to the better judgment of the factotum, who went on gravely breaking up and unpapering after his own manner, as if he had been sorting some toys for a restless child. Another specimen of his talent for representation which struck me forcibly, about the same time, was his telling the story (related in his Letters on Demonology) of a dying man who, in a state of delirium, while his nurse was absent, left his room, appeared at a club of which he was president, and was taken for his own ghost. In relating this not very likely story, he described with his deep and lingering tones, and with gestures and looks suited to each part of the action, the sick man, deadly pale, and with vacant eyes, walking into the club-room; the silence and consternation of the club; the supposed spectre moving to the head of the table; giving a ghastly salutation to the company; raising a glass towards his lips; stiffly turning his head from side to side, as if pledging the several members; his departure just at midnight; and the

[1] Mr. Rose was at this time meditating his entertaining little *jeu d'esprit*, entitled 'Anecdotes of Monkeys.'

breathless conference of the club, as they recovered themselves from this strange visit. St. Ronan's Well was published soon after the telling of this story, and I have no doubt that Sir Walter had it in his mind in writing one of the last scenes of that novel.

'He read a play admirably well, distinguishing the speeches by change of tone and manner, without naming the characters. I had the pleasure of hearing him recite, shortly before it was published, his own spirited ballad of "Bonny Dundee"; and never did I listen to more "eloquent music." This was in one of the last years of his life, but the lines

> Away, to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks!
> Ere I own a usurper, I'll couch with the fox!

could not, in his most vigorous days, have been intonated with more fire and energy.

'In conversation he sometimes added very strikingly to the ludicrous or pathetic effect of an expression by dwelling on a syllable; *holding the note*, as it would have been called in music. Thus I recollect his telling, with an extremely droll emphasis, that once, when a boy, he was "*cuffed*" by his aunt for singing,

> There's nae repentance in my heart,
> The fiddle's in my arms![1]

'No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, when I first knew him, the hair upon his forehead was quite grey, but his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had still a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek, silvery locks above; a contrast which might seem rather suited to a jovial and humorous, than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his

[1] These lines are from the old ballad, 'Macpherson's Lament,'—the groundwork of Burns's glorious 'Macpherson's Farewell.'—See Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xvii. p. 259.

eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted that the iris contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for showing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting; and, when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally, when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate and light up with a tragi-comic, harebrained expression, quite peculiar to himself; one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would show itself sometimes, as he sat silent, by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbours, indescribably whimsical, and seeming to ask from their looks whether the spark of drollery should be suppressed or allowed to blaze out. In the full tide of mirth he did indeed "laugh the heart's laugh," like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words; he could go on telling or descanting, while his lungs did "crow like chanticleer," his syllables, in the struggle, growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.

'The habits of life at Abbotsford, when I first saw it, ran in the same easy, rational, and pleasant course which I believe they always afterwards took; though the family was at this time rather straitened in its arrangements, as some of the principal rooms were not finished. After breakfast Sir Walter took his short interval of study in the light and elegant little room afterwards called Miss Scott's. That which he occupied when Abbotsford was complete, though more convenient in some material respects, seemed to me the least cheerful[1] and least private

[1] It is, however, the only sitting-room in the house that looks *southward*.

in the house. It had, however, a recommendation which perhaps he was very sensible of, that as he sat at his writing-table, he could look out at his young trees. About one o'clock he walked or rode, generally with some of his visitors. At this period, he used to be a good deal on horseback, and a pleasant sight it was to see the gallant old gentleman, in his sealskin cap and short green jacket, lounging along a field-side on his mare, Sibyl Grey, and pausing now and then to talk, with a serio-comic look, to a labouring man or woman, and rejoice them with some quaint saying in broad Scotch. The dinner-hour was early; the sitting after dinner was hospitably but not immoderately prolonged; and the whole family party (for such it always seemed, even if there were several visitors) then met again for a short evening, which was passed in conversation and music. I once heard Sir Walter say that he believed there was a "pair" of cards (such was his antiquated expression) somewhere in the house—but probably there is no tradition of their having ever been used. The drawing-room and library (unfurnished at the time of my first visit) opened into each other, and formed a beautiful evening apartment. By every one who has visited at Abbotsford they must be associated with some of the most delightful recollections of his life. Sir Walter listened to the music of his daughters, which was all congenial to his own taste, with a never-failing enthusiasm. He followed the fine old songs which Mrs. Lockhart sang to her harp with his mind, eyes, and lips, almost as if joining in an act of religion. To other musical performances he was a dutiful, and often a pleased listener, but I believe he cared little for mere music; the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of colour or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic, or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places,

or circumstances in which he took an interest. Even in architecture, his taste had the same bias; almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment.

'It seemed at first a little strange, in a scene where so many things brought to mind the Waverley Novels, to hear no direct mention of them, or even allusion to their existence. But as forbearance on this head was a rule on which a complete tacit understanding subsisted, there was no embarrassment or appearance of mystery on the subject. Once or twice I have heard a casual reference made, in Sir Walter's presence, to some topic in the novels; no surprise or appearance of displeasure followed, but the conversation, so far as it tended that way, died a natural death. It has, I believe, happened that he himself has been caught unawares on the forbidden ground; I have heard it told by a very acute observer, not now living, that on his coming once to Abbotsford, after the publication of The Pirate, Sir Walter asked him, "Well, and how is our friend Kemble? glorious John!" and then, recollecting, of course, that he was talking Claude Halcro, he checked himself, and could not for some moments recover from the false step. Had a man been ever so prone to indiscretion on such subjects, it would have been unpardonable to betray it towards Sir Walter Scott, who (beside all his other claims to respect and affection) was himself cautious, even to nicety, of hazarding an enquiry or remark which might appear to be an intrusion upon the affairs of those with whom he conversed. It may be observed, too, that the publications of the day were by no means the staple of conversation at Abbotsford, though they had their turn; and with respect to his own works, Sir Walter did not often talk even of those which were avowed. If he ever indulged in anything like egotism, he loved better to speak of what he had done and seen than of what he had written.

'After all, there is perhaps hardly a secret in the world which has not its safety-valve. Though Sir Walter abstained strictly from any mention of the Waverley

novels, he did not scruple to talk, and that with great zest, of the plays which had been founded upon some of them, and the characters, as there represented. Soon after our first meeting, he described to me, with his usual dramatic power, the deathbed scene of "the original Dandie Dinmont";[1] of course referring, ostensibly at least, to the *opera* of Guy Mannering. He dwelt with extreme delight upon Mackay's performances of the Bailie and Dominie Sampson, and appeared to taste them with all the fresh and disinterested enjoyment of a common spectator. I do not know a more interesting circumstance in the history of the Waverley Novels than the pleasure which their illustrious author thus received, as it were at the rebound, from those creations of his own mind which had so largely increased the enjoyments of all the civilized world.

'In one instance only did he, in my presence, say or do anything which seemed to have an intentional reference to the novels themselves, while they were yet unacknowledged. On the last day of my visit in 1823, I rode out with Sir Walter and his friend Mr. Rose, who was then his guest and frequent companion in these short rambles. Sir Walter led us a little way down the left bank of the Tweed, and then into the moors by a track called the Girth Road, along which, he told us, the pilgrims from that side of the river used to come to Melrose. We traced upward, at a distance, the course of the little stream called the Elland—Sir Walter, as his habit was, pausing now and then to point out anything in the prospect that was either remarkable in itself, or associated with any interesting recollection. I remember, in particular, his showing us, on a distant eminence, a dreary lone house, called the Hawk's Nest, in which a young man, returning from a fair with money, had been murdered in the night, and buried under the floor, where his remains were found after the death or departure of the inmates; the fact was simple enough in itself, but related in his manner, it was just such a story as should have been told by a poet on a

[1] See Note to Guy Mannering, Waverley Novels, vol. iii. p. 242.

lonely heath. When we had ridden a little time on the moors, he said to me rather pointedly, "I am going to show you something that I think will interest you"; and presently, in a wild corner of the hills, he halted us at a place where stood three small ancient towers or castellated houses, in ruins, at short distances from each other. It was plain, upon the slightest consideration of the topography, that one (perhaps any one) of these was the tower of Glendearg, where so many romantic and marvellous adventures happen in The Monastery. While we looked at this forlorn group, I said to Sir Walter that they were what Burns called "ghaist-alluring edifices." "Yes," he answered carelessly, "I daresay there are many stories about them." As we returned, by a different route, he made me dismount and take a footpath through a part of Lord Somerville's grounds, where the Elland runs through a beautiful little valley, the stream winding between level borders of the brightest greensward, which narrow or widen as the steep sides of the glen advance or recede. The place is called the Fairy Dean, and it required no cicerone to tell that the glen was that in which Father Eustace, in The Monastery, is intercepted by the White Lady of Avenel.'

Every friend of Sir Walter's must admire particularly Mr. Adolphus's exquisite description of his laugh; but indeed, every word of these memoranda is precious, and I shall by and by give the rest of them under the proper date.

In September, the Highland Society of Scotland, at the request of the late Sir Henry Stewart of Allanton, sent a deputation to his seat in Lanarkshire, to examine and report upon his famous improvements in the art of transplanting trees. Sir Walter was one of the committee appointed for this business, and he took a lively interest in it; as witness the Essay on Landscape Gardening,[1] which, whatever may be the fate of Sir Henry Stewart's own writings, will transmit his name to posterity. Scott made several Allantonian experiments at Abbotsford; but found

[1] Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. pp. 77-151.

reason in the sequel to abate somewhat of the enthusiasm which his Essay expresses as to *the system*. The question, after all, comes to pounds, shillings, and pence—and, whether Sir Henry's accounts had or had not been accurately kept, the thing turned out greatly more expensive on Tweedside than he had found it represented in Clydesdale.

I accompanied Sir Walter on this little expedition, in the course of which we paid several other visits, and explored not a few ancient castles in the upper regions of the Tweed and the Clyde. Even while the weather was most unpropitious, nothing could induce him to remain in the carriage when we approached any ruined or celebrated edifice. If he had never seen it before, his curiosity was like that of an eager stripling;—if he had examined it fifty times, he must renew his familiarity, and gratify the tenderness of youthful reminiscences. While on the road, his conversation never flagged—story suggested story, and ballad came upon ballad in endless succession. But what struck me most was the apparently omnivorous grasp of his memory. That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romance that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me: but it seemed as if he remembered everything without exception, so it were in anything like the shape of verse, that he had ever read. For example, the morning after we left Allanton, we went across the country to breakfast with his friend Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse), who accompanied us in the same carriage; and his Lordship happening to repeat a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a Magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at College together, Scott immediately began at the beginning, and gave it us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the day before. I could after this easily believe a story often told by Hogg, to the effect that, lamenting in Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, and of which he then could recall merely the subject, and one or two fragments,

Sir Walter forthwith said, with a smile, 'Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I'll dictate your ballad to you, word for word';—which was done accordingly.[1]

As this was among the first times that I ever travelled for a few days in company with Scott, I may as well add the surprise with which his literary diligence, when away from home and his books, could not fail to be observed. Wherever we slept, whether in a noble mansion or in the shabbiest of country inns, and whether the work was done after retiring at night or before an early start in the morning, he *very rarely* mounted the carriage again without having a packet of the well-known aspect ready sealed, and corded, and addressed to his printer in Edinburgh. I used to suspect that he had adopted in his latter years the plan of writing everything on paper of the quarto form, in place of the folio which he at an earlier period used, chiefly because in this way, whatever he was writing, and wherever he wrote, he might seem to casual observers to be merely engaged upon a common letter; and the rapidity of his execution, taken with the shape of his sheet, has probably deceived hundreds; but when he had finished his two or three letters, St. Ronan's Well, or whatever was in hand, had made a chapter in advance.

The following was his first letter to Miss Edgeworth

[1] 'One morning at breakfast, in my father's house, shortly after one of Sir Walter's severe illnesses, he was asked to partake of some of "the baked meats that coldly did furnish forth the *breakfast* table."—"No, no," he answered; "I bear in mind at present, Bob, the advice of your old friend Dr. Weir—

> From season'd meats avert your eyes,
> From hams, and tongues, and pigeon pies—
> A venison pasty set before ye,
> Each bit you eat—*Memento mori.*

This was a verse of a clever rhyming prescription our cousin, Dr. Weir of Eastbank, had sent some 30 years before, and which my father then remembered to have repeated to Sir Walter upon one of their Liddesdale raids. The verses had almost entirely escaped his memory, but Sir Walter was able to give us a long *screed* of them. Some surprise was expressed at the tenaciousness of his memory; and to a remark of my mother, that he seemed to know something of the words of every song that ever was sung, he replied, "I daresay it wad be gey ill to kittle me in a Scots ane, at ony rate."'—*Note by Mr. Andrew Shortrede.*—[1839.]

after her return to Ireland. Her youngest sister Sophia—(a beautiful creature—now gone, like most of the pleasant party then assembled)—had particularly pleased him by her singing of a fragment of an Irish ditty, the heroine of which was a sad damsel in a *petticoat of red*—the chorus, I think, something like

Shool—Shool! ochone—ochone!
Thinking on the days that are long enough agone;

and he had, as we shall see, been busying himself among his ballad collections, to see if he could recover any more of the words than the young lady had given him.

'*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *22nd Sept.* 1823.

'MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH—Miss Harriet had the goodness to give me an account of your safe arrival in the Green Isle, of which I was, sooth to say, extremely glad; for I had my own private apprehensions that your very disagreeable disorder might return while you were among strangers, and in our rugged climate. I now conclude you are settled quietly at home, and looking back on recollections of mountains, and valleys, and pipes, and clans, and cousins, and masons, and carpenters, and puppy-dogs, and all the confusion of Abbotsford, as one does on the recollections of a dream. We shall not easily forget the vision of having seen you and our two young friends, and your kind indulgence for all our humours, sober and fantastic, rough or smooth. Mamma writes to make her own acknowledgments for your very kind attention about the cobweb stockings, which reached us under the omnipotent frank of Croker, who, like a true Irish heart, never scruples stretching his powers a little to serve a friend.

'We are all here much as you left us, only in possession of our drawing-room, and glorious with our gas-lights, which as yet have only involved us once in total darkness—once in a temporary eclipse. In both cases the remedy

was easy, and the cause obvious; and if the gas has no greater objections than I have yet seen or can anticipate, it is soon like to put wax and mutton-suet entirely out of fashion. I have recovered, by great accident, another verse or two of Miss Sophia's beautiful Irish air; it is only curious as hinting at the cause of the poor damsel of the red petticoat's deep dolour:—

I went to the mill, but the miller was gone;
I sate me down and cried ochone,
To think on the days that are past and gone,
Of Dickie Macphalion that's slain.
Shool, shool, etc.

I sold my rock, I sold my reel,
And sae hae I my spinning-wheel,
And all to buy a cap of steel,
For Dickie Macphalion that's slain.
Shool, shool, etc. etc.

'But who was Dickie Macphalion for whom this lament was composed? Who was the Pharaoh for whom the Pyramid was raised? The questions are equally dubious and equally important, but as the one, we may reasonably suppose, was a King of Egypt, so I think we may guess the other to have been a Captain of Rapparees, since the ladies, God bless them, honour with the deepest of their lamentation gallants who live wildly, die bravely, and scorn to survive until they become old and not worth weeping for. So much for Dickie Macphalion, who, I daresay, was in his day "a proper young man."[1]

'We have had Sir Humphrey Davy here for a day or two—very pleasant and instructive, and Will Rose for a month—that is, coming and going.—Lockhart has been

[1] As clever Tom Clinch, while the rabble was bawling,
Rode stately through Holborn to die in his calling,
He stopt at the George for a bottle of sack,
And promised to pay for it when he came back.
His waistcoat, and stockings, and breeches were white,
His cap had a new cherry ribbon to tie't.
The maids to the doors and the balconies ran,
And said, 'Lack-a-day! he's a proper young man!'
SWIFT.

pleading at the circuit for a clansman of mine, who, having sustained an affront from two men on the road home from Earlstown fair, nobly waylaid and murdered them both single-handed. He also cut off their noses, which was carrying the matter rather too far, and so the jury thought—so my namesake must strap for it, as many of *The Rough Clan* have done before him. After this Lockhart and I went to Sir Henry Stewart's, to examine his process of transplanting trees. He exercises wonderful power, certainly, over the vegetable world, and has made his trees dance about as merrily as ever did Orpheus; but he has put me out of conceit with my profession of a landscape-gardener, now I see so few brains are necessary for a stock in trade. I wish Miss Harriet would dream no more ominous visions about Spicie.[1] The poor thing has been very ill of that fatal disorder proper to the canine race, called, *par excellence*, *the Distemper*. I have prescribed for her, as who should say thus you would doctor a dog, and I hope to bring her through, as she is a very affectionate little creature, and of a fine race. She has still an odd wheezing, however, which makes me rather doubtful of success. The Lockharts are both well, and at present our lodgers, together with John Hugh, or, as he calls himself, Donichue, which sounds like one of your old Irish kings. They all join in everything kind and affectionate to you and the young ladies, and best compliments to your brother.—Believe me ever, dear Miss Edgeworth, yours, with the greatest truth and respect,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The following letter was addressed to Joanna Baillie on the death of her brother, the celebrated physician :—

[1] *Spice*, one of the Pepper and Mustard terriers. Scott varied the names, unlike his Dandie Dinmont, but still, as he phrased it, 'stuck to the cruets.' At one time he had a *Pepper*, a *Mustard*, a *Spice*, a *Ginger*, a *Catchup*, and a *Soy*—all descendants of the real Charlie's-hope patriarchs.

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *3rd October* 1823.

'MY DEAREST FRIEND—Your very kind letter reached me just while I was deliberating how to address you on the painful, most painful subject, to which it refers, and considering how I could best intrude my own sympathy amidst your domestic affliction. The token you have given of your friendship, by thinking of me at such a moment, I will always regard as a most precious, though melancholy proof of its sincerity. We have, indeed, to mourn such a man, as, since medicine was first esteemed an useful and honoured science, has rarely occurred to grace its annals, and who will be lamented so long as any one lives, who has experienced the advantage of his professional skill, and the affectionate kindness by which it was accompanied. My neighbour and kinsman, John Scott of Gala, who was attended by our excellent friend during a very dangerous illness, is mingling his sorrow with mine, as one who laments almost a second father; and when in this remote corner there are two who join in such a sincere tribute to his memory, what must be the sorrows within his more immediate sphere of exertion! I do, indeed, sincerely pity the family and friends who have lost such a head, and that at the very time when they might, in the course of nature, have looked to enjoy his society for many years, and even more closely and intimately than during the preceding period of his life, when his domestic intercourse was so much broken in upon by his professional duties. It is not for us, in this limited state of observation and comprehension, to enquire why the lives most useful to society, and most dear to friendship, seem to be of a shorter date than those which are useless, or perhaps worse than useless;—but the certainty that in another and succeeding state of things these apparent difficulties will be balanced and explained, is the best if not the only cure for unavailing sorrow, and this your well-balanced and powerful mind knows better how to apply, than I how to teach the doctrine.

'We were made in some degree aware of the extremely precarious state of our late dear friend's health, by letters which young Surtees had from his friends in Gloucestershire, during a residence of a few weeks with us, and which mentioned the melancholy subject in a very hopeless manner, and with all the interest which it was calculated to excite. Poor dear Mrs. Baillie is infinitely to be pitied, but you are a family of love; and though one breach has been made among you, will only extend your arms towards each other the more, to hide, though you cannot fill up the gap which has taken place. The same consolation remains for Mrs. Agnes and yourself, my dear friend; and I have no doubt, that in the affection of Dr. Baillie's family, and their success in life, you will find those pleasing ties which connect the passing generation with that which is rising to succeed it upon the stage.

'Sophia is in the way of enlarging her family—an event to which I look forward with a mixture of anxiety and hope. One baby, not very strong, though lively and clever, is a frail chance upon which to stake happiness; at the same time, God knows there have been too many instances of late of the original curse having descended on young mothers with fatal emphasis; but we will hope the best. In the meantime her spirits are good, and her health equally so. I know that even at this moment these details will not be disagreeable to you, so strangely are life and death, sorrow and pleasure, blended together in the tapestry of human life.

'I answer your letter before I have seen Sophia; but I know well how deeply she is interested in your grief. My wife and Anne send their kindest and most sympathetic regards. Walter is at the Royal Military College to study the higher branches of his profession, and Charles has returned to Wales.

'My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Baillie and Mrs. Agnes, and I ever am, my dear friend, respectfully and affectionately, yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *October* 29, 1823.

'MY DEAR TERRY—Our correspondence has been flagging for some time, yet I have much to thank you for, and perhaps something to apologize for. We did not open Mr. Baldock's commode, because, in honest truth, this place has cost me a great deal within these two years, and I was loth to add a superfluity, however elegant, to the heavy expense already necessarily incurred. Lady Scott, the party most interested in the drawing-room, thinks mirrors, when they cast up, better things and more necessary. We have received the drawing-room grate—very handsome indeed—from Bower, but not those for the library or my room, nor are they immediately wanted. Nothing have we heard of the best bed and its accompaniments, but there is no hurry for this neither. We are in possession of the bed-room story, garrets, and a part of the under or sunk story—basement, the learned call it; but the library advances slowly. The extreme wetness of the season has prevented the floor from being laid, nor dare we now venture it till spring, when shifting and arranging the books will be "a pleasing pain and toil with a gain." The front of the house is now enclosed by a courtyard wall, with flankers of 100 feet, and a handsome gateway. The interior of the court is to be occupied by a large gravel drive for carriages, the rest with flowers, shrubs, and a few trees: the inside of the court-yard wall is adorned with large carved medallions from the old Cross of Edinburgh, and Roman or colonial heads in bas-relief from the ancient station of Petreia, now called Old Penrith. A walk runs along it, which I intend to cover with creepers as a trellised arbour: the court-yard is separated from the garden by a very handsome colonnade, the arches filled up with cast-iron, and the cornice carved with flowers, after the fashion of the running cornice on the cloisters at Melrose: the masons here cut so cheap that it really

tempts one. All this is in a great measure finished, and by throwing the garden into a subordinate state, as a sort of *plaisance*, it has totally removed the awkward appearance of its being so near the house. On the contrary, it seems a natural and handsome accompaniment to the old-looking mansion. Some people of very considerable taste have been here, who have given our doings much applause, particularly Dr. Russell, a beautiful draughtsman, and no granter of propositions. The interior of the hall is finished with scutcheons, sixteen of which, running along the centre, I intend to paint with my own quarterings, so far as I know them, for I am as yet uncertain of two on my mother's side; but fourteen are no bad quartering to be quite real, and the others may be covered with a cloud, since I have no ambition to be a canon of Strasburg, for which sixteen are necessary; I may light on these, however. The scutcheons on the cornice I propose to charge with the blazonry of all the Border clans, eighteen in number, and so many of the great families, not clans, as will occupy the others. The windows are to be painted with the different bearings of different families of the clan of Scott, which, with their quarterings and impalings, will make a pretty display. The arranging all these arms, etc., have filled up what Robinson Crusoe calls the rainy season, for such this last may on the whole be called.—I shall be greatly obliged to you to let me know what debts I owe in London, that I may remit accordingly: best to pay for one's piping in time, and before we are familiar with our purchases. You mentioned having some theatrical works for me; do not fail to let me know the amount. Have you seen Dr. Meyrick's account of the Ancient Armour? —it is a book beautifully got up, and of much antiquarian information.[1]

'Having said so much for my house, I add for my family, that those who are here are quite well, but Lady Scott a little troubled with asthma. Ballantyne will send you my last affair now in progress: it is within, or may be easily compressed into dramatic time; whether it is

[1] Three vols. quarto. London, 1821.

otherwise qualified for the stage, I cannot guess.—I am, my dear Terry, truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

The novel to which Sir Walter thus alludes was published about the middle of December, and in its English reception there was another falling off, which of course somewhat dispirited the bookseller for the moment. Scotch readers in general dissented stoutly from this judgment, alleging (as they might well do) that Meg Dods deserved a place by the side of Monkbarns, Bailie Jarvie, and Captain Dalgetty;—that no one, who had lived in the author's own country, could hesitate to recognise vivid and happy portraitures in Touchwood, MacTurk, and the recluse minister of St. Ronan's;—that the descriptions of natural scenery might rank with any he had given;—and, finally, that the whole character of Clara Mowbray, but especially its development in the third volume, formed an original creation, destined to be classed by posterity with the highest efforts of tragic romance. Some Edinburgh critics, however—(both talkers and writers)—received with considerable grudgings certain sarcastic sketches of the would-be-fine life of the watering-place—sketches which their Southern brethren had kindly suggested *might* be drawn from *Northern* observation, but could never appear better than fantastic caricatures to any person who had visited even a third-rate English resort of the same nominal class. There is no doubt that the author dashed off these minor personages with, in the painter's phrase, *a rich brush*; but I must confess my belief that they have far more truth about them than his countrymen seemed at the time willing to allow; and if any of my readers, whether Scotch or English, has ever happened to spend a few months, not in either an English or a Scotch watering-place of the present day, but among such miscellaneous assemblages of British nondescripts and outcasts,—including often persons of higher birth than any of the *beau monde* of St. Ronan's Well,—as now infest many towns of France and Switzerland, he will, I am satisfied, be inclined to admit that, while the Continent was shut, as it was in

the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestered place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen—(almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne or Dieppe is now)—may have supplied the future novelist's note-book with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr. Quackleben, and Mr. Winterblossom. It should, moreover, be borne in mind, that during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's 'own romantic town' a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-masters of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh, it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed among those who had chanced to observe the progress of their personal histories; and I heard many name, when the novel was new, a booby of some rank, in whom they recognised a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo.

Sir Walter had shown a remarkable degree of good-nature in the completion of this novel. When the end came in view, James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine. In the original conception, and in the book as actually written and printed, Miss Mowbray's mock marriage had not halted at the profane ceremony of the church; and the delicate printer shrunk from the idea of obtruding on the fastidious public the possibility of any personal contamination having been incurred by a high-born damsel of the nineteenth century. Scott was at first inclined to dismiss his friend's scruples as briefly as he had done those of Blackwood in the case of the Black Dwarf:—'You would never have quarrelled with it,' he

said, 'had the thing happened to a girl in gingham :—the silk petticoat can make little difference.' James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue ;—and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and re-write about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate, to a certain extent, the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted, to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative, and the dark effect of its catastrophe.

Whoever might take offence with different parts of the book, it was rapturously hailed by the inhabitants of Innerleithen, who immediately identified the most striking of its localities with those of their own pretty village and picturesque neighbourhood, and foresaw in this celebration a chance of restoring the popularity of their long-neglected *Well*;—the same to which, as the reader of the first of these volumes may have noticed, Sir Walter Scott had occasionally escorted his mother and sister in the days of boyhood. The notables of the little town voted by acclamation that the old name of Innerleithen should be, as far as possible, dropped thenceforth, and that of St. Ronan's adopted. Nor were they mistaken in their auguries. An unheard-of influx of water-bibbers forthwith crowned their hopes ; and spruce *hottles* and huge staring lodging-houses soon arose to disturb woefully every association that had induced Sir Walter to make Innerleithen the scene of a romance. Nor were they who profited by these invasions of the *genius loci* at all sparing in their demonstrations of gratitude. The traveller reads on the corner of every new creation there, *Abbotsford Place*, *Waverley Row*, *The Marmion Hotel*, or some inscription of the like coinage.

Among other consequences of the revived fame of the place, a yearly festival was instituted for the celebration of *The St. Ronan's Border Games*. A club of *Bowmen of the Border*, arrayed in doublets of Lincoln green, with broad blue bonnets, and having the Ettrick Shepherd for Captain, assumed the principal management of this exhibition ; and Sir Walter was well pleased to be enrolled

among them, and during several years was a regular attendant, both on the Meadow, where (besides archery) leaping, racing, wrestling, stone-heaving, and hammer-throwing went on opposite to the noble old Castle of Traquair, and at the subsequent banquet, where Hogg, in full costume, always presided as master of the ceremonies. In fact, a gayer spectacle than that of the *St. Ronan's Games*, in those days, could not well have been desired. The Shepherd, even when on the verge of threescore, exerted himself lustily in the field, and seldom failed to carry off some of the prizes, to the astonishment of his vanquished juniors; and the *bon-vivants* of Edinburgh mustered strong among the gentry and yeomanry of Tweeddale to see him afterwards in his glory, filling the president's chair with eminent success, and commonly supported on this—which was, in fact, the grandest evening of his year—by Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Sir Adam Fergusson, and *Peter* Robertson.

In Edinburgh at least, the play founded, after the usual fashion, on St. Ronan's Well, had success far beyond the expectations of the novelist, whatever may have been those of the dramatizer. After witnessing the first representation, Scott wrote thus to Terry—'We had a new piece t'other night from St. Ronan's, which, though I should have supposed it ill adapted for the stage, succeeded wonderfully—chiefly by Murray's acting of the Old Nabob. Mackay also made an excellent Meg Dods, and kept his gestures and his action more within the verge of female decorum than I thought possible.'

A broad piece of drollery, in the shape of an epilogue, delivered in character by Mackay when he first took a benefit as Meg Dods, is included in the last edition of Scott's Poetical Works;[1] but though it caused great merriment at the time in Edinburgh, the allusions are so exclusively local and temporary, that I fear no commentary could ever make it intelligible elsewhere.

[1] See edition 1834, vol. xi. p. 369.

CHAPTER LX

Publication of Redgauntlet—Death of Lora Byron—Library and Museum—'The Wallace Chair'—House-Painting, etc.—Anecdotes—Letters to Constable, Miss Edgeworth, Terry, Miss Baillie, Lord Montagu, Mr. Southey, Charles Scott, etc.—Speech at the opening of the Edinburgh Academy—Death and Epitaph of Maida —Fires in Edinburgh.

1824

IMMEDIATELY on the conclusion of St. Ronan's Well, Sir Walter began the novel of Redgauntlet;—but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries.* The book was published in June 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The re-introduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age, and fortunes hopelessly blighted—and the presenting him—with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period historical truth had been so admirably blended—as the moving principle of events, not only entirely, but notoriously imaginary—this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest many disagreeable and disadvantageous comparisons; yet, had there been no Waverley, I am persuaded the fallen and faded Ascanius of Redgauntlet would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What

novel or drama has surpassed the grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles—the most tragic of farces?—or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Nantie Ewart?—or Wandering Willie and his Tale?—the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect! Of the young correspondents Darsie Latimer and Allan Fairford, and the Quakers of Mount Sharon, and indeed of numberless minor features in Redgauntlet, no one who has read the first volume of these memoirs will expect me to speak at length here. With posterity assuredly this novel will yield in interest to none of the series; for it contains perhaps more of the author's personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year—*mirabile dictu!*—produced but one novel; and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not *immediately* act upon them, certain hints about the danger of 'overcropping,' which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in preparing for the press a Second Edition of his voluminous Swift. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he corrected his notes, and the Life of the Dean throughout, with considerable care. He also threw off several reviews and other petty miscellanies—among which last occurs his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written for Ballantyne's newspaper immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached Abbotsford.[1]

[1] See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 343.—Mr. Andrew Shortrede, who was in 1824 learning the printing business in Edinburgh, says—'Sir Walter came down from the Court of Session to the printing-office the day the intelligence of Byron's death reached Edinburgh, and there dictated to James Ballantyne the article which appeared in the Weekly Journal. I think it was inserted without correction, or revisal, except by Ballantyne. From these circumstances, I with others imagined James had himself produced it in some moment of inspiration; but when I afterwards told him how I had been misled, he detailed *suo more* the full, true, and particular history of the article. Separate copies, I remember, were thrown off for some of Byron's friends.'—[1839.]

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer months of this year; and his woods were now in such a state of progress that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's Transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the Backwoods, and both he and Tom made strenuous efforts to attain some dexterity in using them; but neither succeeded. The American axe, in particular, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *kebbuck* (*i.e.* a cheese of skimmed milk). The old-fashioned large and broad axe was soon resumed; and the belt that bore it had accommodation also for a chisel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the 'Belted Knight,' accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest-craft, jogging over the heather on a breezy morning, with Thomas Purdie at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance?

Notwithstanding the numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him: and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done; and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example (a most complex and beautiful one), was done entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw of Darnick—the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an

old lady pondered the development of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunch-backed tailor, by name *William* Goodfellow—(save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*)—who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomielees; one of the race who creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and newsmen of the parish,—in Scottish nomenclature *cardooers*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words—'Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations.' Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget the evening on which the poor tailor died. When Scott entered the hovel he found everything silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret; —at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice, 'The Lord bless and reward you,' and expired with the effort.

In the painting of his interior, too, Sir Walter personally directed everything. He abominated the commonplace daubing of walls, panels, doors, and window-boards, with coats of white, blue, or grey, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. He desired to have about him, wherever he could manage it, rich, though not gaudy, hangings, or substantial old-fashioned wainscot-work, with no ornament but that of carving; and where the wood

was to be painted at all, it was done in strict imitation of oak or cedar. Except in the drawing-room, which he abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance of antique carved oak, relieved by coats of arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices to the eye of the same material, but really composed of casts in plaster of Paris, after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doted from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular, had a devoted attachment to his person; and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel tendered at the very outset of his career. A printer's apprentice attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained the difficulties and perils, the almost certain distresses, the few and narrow chances of this aspiring walk. He described the hundreds of ardent spirits that pine out their lives in solitary garrets, lamenting over the rash eagerness with which they had obeyed the suggestions of young ambition, and chosen a career in which success of any sort is rare, and no success but the highest is worth attaining. 'You have talents and energy,' said he, 'but who can say whether you have genius? These boyish drawings can never be relied on as proofs of *that*. If you feel within you such a glow of ambition that you would rather run a hundred chances of obscurity and penury than miss *one* of being a Wilkie,—make up your mind, and take the bold plunge; but if your object is merely to raise yourself to a station of worldly comfort and independence,—if you would fain look forward with tolerable

assurance to the prospect of being a respectable citizen, with your own snug roof over your head, and the happy faces of a wife and children about you,—pause and reflect well. It appears to me that there is little demand for fine works of the pencil in this country. Not a few artists, who have even obtained high reputation, find employment scarce, and starve under their laurels. I think profit in Britain is, with very rare exceptions, annexed to departments of obvious and direct utility, in which the mass of the people are concerned; and it has often struck me, that some clever fellow might make a good hit, if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting.' The young man thus addressed (Mr. D. R. Hay) was modest and wise enough to accept the advice with thankfulness, and to act upon it. After a few years he had qualified himself to take charge of all this delicate limning and blazoning at Abbotsford. He is now, I understand, at the head of a great and flourishing establishment in Edinburgh; and a treatise on the Science of Colour, which has proceeded from his pen, is talked of as reflecting high credit on his taste and understanding. Nor should I omit what seems a particularly honourable trait in Mr. Hay:—he is said to be one of the most liberal patrons of native art now in existence; in fact, to possess an unrivalled collection of the works of contemporary Scottish painters.

Meantime, the progress of Abbotsford stimulated largely both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its final adornment. I have already alluded with regret to the non-completion of the Poet's own catalogue of his literary and antiquarian rarities, begun under the title of 'Reliquiæ Trottcosianæ,' and mentioned Mr. Train, the affectionate Supervisor of Excise, as the most unwearied and bountiful of all the contributors to the *Museum*. Now, he would fain have his part in the substantial '*plenishing*' also; and I transcribe, as a specimen of his zeal, the account which I have received from

himself of the preparation and transmission of one piece of furniture, to which his friend allotted a distinguished place, for it was one of the *two* chairs that ultimately stood in his own *sanctum sanctorum*. In those days Mr. Train's official residence was at Kirkintilloch, in Stirlingshire; and he says, in his *Memoranda*,—

'Rarbiston, or, as it is now called, Robroyston, where the valiant Wallace was betrayed by Monteith of Ruskie, is only a few miles distant from Kirkintilloch. The walls of the house where the first scene of that disgraceful tragedy was acted were standing, on my arrival in that quarter. The roof was entirely gone; but I observed that some butts of the rafters, built into the wall, were still remaining. As the ruin was about being taken down to make way for the ploughshare, I easily succeeded in purchasing these old stumps from the farmer upon whose ground it stood. When taken out of the building, these pieces of wood were seemingly so much decayed as to be fit only for fuel; but after planing off about an inch from the surface, I found that the remainder of the wood was as hard as a bone, and susceptible of a fine polish. I then resolved upon having a chair of the most antique description made out of these wasted blocks as a memorial of our most patriotic hero, with a feeling somewhat similar to theirs who remember their Saviour in the crucifix.

'In the execution of this undertaking, workmen of various denominations were employed. It was modelled from an old chair in the Palace of Hamilton, and is nearly covered with carved work, representing rocks, heather, and thistles, emblematic of Scotland, and indented with brass, representing the *Harp of the North*, surrounded with laurels, and supported by targets, claymores, Lochaber axes, war horns, etc. The seat is covered with silk velvet, beneath which is a drawer, containing a book bound in the most primitive form in Robroyston wood, with large clasps. In this book are detailed at length some of the particulars here briefly alluded to, with the affirmations of several persons to whose care the chair was entrusted in the course of making.

'On the (inside) back of the chair is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription :—

THIS CHAIR,
MADE OF THE ONLY REMAINING WOOD
OF THE
HOUSE AT ROBROYSTON,
IN WHICH THE
MATCHLESS SIR WILLIAM WALLACE
'WAS DONE TO DEATH BY FELON HAND
FOR GUARDING WELL HIS FATHERS' LAND,'
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT,
JOSEPH TRAIN.

'Exaggerated reports of this chair spread over the adjacent country with a fiery-cross-like speed, and raised public curiosity to such a height, that persons in their own carriages came many miles to see it. I happened to be in a distant part of my district at the time; but I dare-say many persons in Kirkintilloch yet remember how triumphantly the symbolic chair was borne from my lodgings to the bank of the Great Canal, to be there shipped for Abbotsford, in the midst of the town-band playing "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," and surrounded by thousands, who made the welkin resound with bursts of national enthusiasm, justifying the couplet of Pope—

All this may be, the people's voice is odd ;
The Scots will fight for Wallace as for God.'—

Such arrivals as that of 'the Wallace Chair' were frequent throughout 1824. It was a happy, and therefore it need hardly be added an uneventful year—his last year of undisturbed prosperity. The little incidents that diversified his domestic interior, and the zeal which he always kept up for all the concerns of his friends, together with a few indications of his opinions on subjects of literary and

political interest, will be found in his correspondence, which will hardly require any editorial explanations.

Within, I think, the same week in January, arrived a copy of Montfauçon's Antiquities, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the Variorum Classics, in a hundred and forty volumes octavo, from Mr. Constable. Sir Walter says—

'*To Archibald Constable, Esq.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *6th January* 1824.

'MY DEAR SIR—Yesterday I had the great pleasure of placing in my provisional library the most splendid present, as I in sincerity believe, which ever an author received from a bookseller. In the shape of these inimitable *Variorums*, who knows what new ideas the Classics may suggest?—for I am determined to shake off the rust which years have contracted, and to read at least some of the most capital of the ancients before I die. Believe me, my dear and old friend, I set a more especial value on this work as coming from you, and as being a pledge that the long and confidential intercourse betwixt us has been agreeable and advantageous to both.—Your truly,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

Miss Edgeworth had written to him to enquire about the health of his eldest daughter, and told him some anecdotes of an American dame, whose head had been turned by the Waverley Novels, and who had, among other demonstrations of enthusiasm, called her farm in Massachussetts, *Charlie's Hope*. This lady had, it seems, corresponded with Mrs. Grant of Laggan, herself for a time one of the 'Authors of Waverley,' and Mrs. Grant, in disclaiming such honours, had spoken of the real source, in terms of such perfect assurance, that the honest American almost fancied her friend must have heard Scott confess; yet still she was in doubts and tribulations, and unhappy till she could hear more. The theory prevalent in her own neighbourhood was, it seems, that the author-

ship was a joint-stock business—Sir Walter being one of the partners, and the other an unfortunate lunatic, of whose papers he had got possession during a lucid interval. Scott answers thus :—

'*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.*

'PARLIAMENT HOUSE, *3rd Feb.* 1824.

'MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH—I answer your kind letter immediately, because I am sure your sisters and you will interest yourselves in Sophia's state of health. My news are not of the best—

Yet not so ill, but may be well reported.

On Saturday, 31st January, she had a daughter, but the poor little stranger left us on the Monday following ; and though Sophia is very patient in her temper, yet her recovery is naturally retarded, and I am sorry to say she has been attacked in her weak state by those spasms which seem a hereditary disorder in my family,—slightly, however, in comparison of the former occasion ; and for the last two days she has been so much recovered as to take a grain or two of calomel, which is specific in the complaint. I have no doubt now, humanly speaking, that her recovery will proceed favourably. I saw her for a quarter of an hour yesterday, which was the first *permanent* visit I have been permitted to make her. So you may conceive we have been anxious enough, living, as is our clannish fashion, very much for and with each other.

'Your American friend, the good-wife of Charlie's Hope, seems disposed, as we say, "to sin her mercies." She quarrels with books that amuse her, because she does not know the author ; and she gives up chicken-pie for the opposite reason, that she knows too much about the bird's pedigree. On the last point I share her prejudices, and never could eat the flesh of any creature I had known while alive. I had once a noble yoke of oxen, which, with the usual agricultural gratitude, we killed for the table ; they said it was the finest beef in the four counties,

but I could never taste Gog and Magog, whom I used to admire in the plough. Moreover, when I was an officer of yeomanry, and used to dress my own charger, I formed an acquaintance with a flock of white turkeys, by throwing them a handful of oats now and then when I came from the stable :—I saw their numbers diminish with real pain, and never attempted to eat any of them without being sick. And yet I have as much of the *rugged and tough* about me as is necessary to carry me through all sorts of duty without much sentimental compunction.

'As to the ingenious system of double authorship, which the Americans have devised for the Waverley Novels, I think it in one point of view extremely likely; since the unhappy man, whom they have thought fit to bring on the carpet, has been shut up in a madhouse for many years; and it seems probable that no brain but a madman's could have invented so much stuff, and no leisure but that of a prisoner could have afforded time to write it all. But, if this poor man be the author of these works, I can assure your kind friend that I neither could, would, nor durst have the slightest communication with him on that or any other subject. In fact, I have never heard of him twice for these twenty years or more. As for honest Mrs. Grant, I cannot conceive why the deuce I should have selected her for a mother-confessor; if it had been yourself, or Joanna, there might have been some probability in the report; but good Mrs. Grant is so very cerulean, and surrounded by so many fetch-and-carry mistresses and misses, and the maintainer of such an unmerciful correspondence, that though I would do her any kindness in my power, yet I should be afraid to be very intimate with a woman whose tongue and pen are rather overpowering. She is an excellent person notwithstanding. Pray, make my respects to your correspondent, and tell her I am very sorry I cannot tell her who the author of Waverley is; but I hope she will do me the justice not to ascribe any dishonourable transactions to me, either in that matter or any other, until she hears that they are likely to correspond with any part of my known character—

which, having been now a lion of good reputation on my own deserts for twenty years and upwards, ought to be indifferently well known in Scotland. She seems to be a very amiable person; and though I shall never see Charlie's Hope or eat her chicken-pies, I am sure I wish health to wait on the one, and good digestion on the other. They are funny people the Americans: I saw a paper in which they said my father was a tailor. If he had been an *honest tailor*, I should not have been ashamed of the circumstance; but he was what may be thought as great a phenomenon, for he was an *honest lawyer*, a cadet of a good family, whose predecessors only dealt in pinking and slashing doublets, not in making them.

'Here is a long letter, and all about trash—but what can you expect? Judges are mumbling and grumbling above me—lawyers are squabbling and babbling around me. The minutes I give to my letter are stolen from Themis. I hope to get to Abbotsford very soon, though only for two or three days, until 12th March, when we go there for some time. Mrs. Spicie seems to be recovering from her asthmatics, which makes a curious case, providing the recovery be completed. Walter came down at Christmas, and speedily assembled three more terriers. One day the whole got off after a hare, and made me remember the basket beadles that Lord Morton used to keep in my youth; for the whole pack opened like hounds, and would have stuck to the chase till they had killed the hare, which would have been like being pricked to death with pins, if we had not licked them off so soon as we could for laughing. This is a dull joke on paper; but imagine the presumption of so many long-backed, short-legged creatures pursuing an animal so very fleet. You will allow it is something ridiculous. I am sure Count O'Halloran would have laughed, and Colonel Heathcock would have been scandalized.[1] Lady S. sends her best and kindest remembrances, in which she is joined by Anne and Sophia (poor body). My fair

[1] See 'The Absentee,' in Miss Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life.

friends, Harriet and Sophia, have a large interest in this greeting, and Lockhart throws himself in with tidings that Sophia continues to mend.—Always, my dear Miss E., most faithfully yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

This is the answer to a request concerning some MS. tragedy, by the late Mrs. Hemans, which seems to have been damned at one of the London theatres, and then to have been tried over again (I know not with what result) at Edinburgh :—

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, *February* 9, 1824.

'MY DEAR MISS BAILLIE—To hear is to obey, and the enclosed line will show that the Siddonses are *agreeable* to act Mrs. Hemans's drama. When you tell the tale say nothing about me, for on no earthly consideration would I like it to be known that I interfered in theatrical matters ;—it brings such a torrent of applications which it is impossible to grant, and often very painful to refuse. Everybody thinks they can write blank verse—and *a word of yours to Mrs. Siddons*, etc. etc. I had one rogue (to be sure he went mad afterwards, poor fellow) who came to bully me in my own house, until he had almost made the mist of twenty years, as Ossian says, roll backwards from my spirit, in which case he might have come by an excellent good beating. I have great pleasure, however, in serving Mrs. Hemans, both on account of her own merit, and because of your patronage. I trust the piece will succeed ; but there is no promising, for Saunders is meanly jealous of being thought less critical than John Bull, and may, perhaps, despise to be pleased with what was less fortunate in London. I wish Mrs. H. had been on the spot to make any alterations, etc., which the players are always demanding. I will read the drama over more carefully than I have yet done, and tell you if anything occurs. I need hardly apologize for being late in letting you hear all this—for the terror of the cramp attacking

poor Sophia in her weak state kept us very feverish; but thank God it did little more than menace her, and the symptoms having now given way, her husband talks of going to town, in which case I intend to take Sophia to Abbotsford, and

> Till she be fat as a Norroway seal,
> I'll feed her on bannocks of barleymeal.[1]

'Betwixt indolence of her own, and Lockhart's extreme anxiety and indulgence, she has forgone the custom of her exercise, to which, please God, we will bring her back by degrees. Little Charles is come down, just entered at Brazen Nose, where, however, he does not go to reside till October. We must see that he fills up the space between to good advantage; he had always quickness enough to learn, and seems now really to have caught the

> fever of renown,
> Spread from the strong contagion of the gown.[2]

'I am sorry for Mr. Crabbe's complaint, under which he suffered, I recollect, when he was here in 1822. Did you ever make out how he liked his Scottish tour? He is not, you know, very *outspoken*, and I was often afraid that he was a little tired by the bustle around him. At another time I would have made a point of attending more to his comforts—but what was to be done amid piping, and drumming, and pageants, and provosts, and bailies, and wild Highlandmen by the score? The time would have been more propitious to a younger poet. The fertility you mention is wonderful, but surely he must correct a great deal to bring his verses into the terse and pointed state in which he gives them to the public.—To come back to Mrs. Hemans. I am afraid that I cannot flatter myself with much interest that can avail her. I go so little out, and mix so seldom either with the gay or the literary world here, that I am reduced, like Gil Blas, much to the company of my brother clerks and men of business—a seclusion which I cannot say I regret greatly; but anything within my power shall not be left

[1] Old Ballad. [2] Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes.

undone. I hope you will make my apology to Mrs. Hemans for the delay which has taken place; if anything should occur essential to be known to the authoress, I will write immediately.—Always yours, my dear friend,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

In the next letter Scott mentions an application from Mr. James Montgomery for some contribution to a miscellaneous volume, compiled by that benevolent poet, for the benefit of the little chimney-sweeps.

'*To Miss Baillie, Hampstead.*

'EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 12, 1824.

'MY DEAREST FRIEND—I hasten to answer your kind enquiries about Sophia. You would learn from my last that she was in a fair way of recovery, and I am happy to say she continues so well that we have no longer any apprehensions on her account. She will soon get into her sitting-room again, and of course have good rest at night, and gather strength gradually. I have been telling her that her face, which was last week the size of a sixpence, has in three or four days attained the diameter of a shilling, and will soon attain its natural and most extensive circumference of half-a-crown. If we live till 12th of next month we shall all go to Abbotsford, and between the black doctor and the red nurse (pony and cow, videlicet) I trust she will be soon well again. As for little Johnnie I have no serious apprehensions, being quite of your mind that his knowingness is only a proof that he is much with grown-up people; the child is active enough, and I hope will do well—yet an only child is like a blot at backgammon, and fate is apt to hit it. I am particularly entertained with your answer to Montgomery, because it happened to be precisely the same with mine: he applied to me for a sonnet or an elegy, instead of which I sent him an account of a manner of constructing chimneys so as scarcely to contract soot; and 2ndly, of a very simple and effectual machine for sweeping away what soot does

adhere. In all the new part of Abbotsford I have lined the chimney-vents with a succession of cones made of the same stuff with common flower-pots, about one and a half inch thick, and eighteen inches or two feet high, placed one above another, and the vent built round them, so that the smoke passing up these round earthen tubes, finds neither corner nor roughness on which to deposit the soot, and in fact there is very little collected. What sweeping is required is most easily performed by a brush like what housemaids call a *pope's head*, the handle of which consists of a succession of pipes, one slipping on the top of another like the joints of a fishing-rod, so that the maid first sweeps the lower part of the vent, then adds another pipe, and sweeps a little higher, and so on. I have found this quite effectual, but the lining of the chimneys makes the accumulations of soot very trifling in comparison with the common case. Montgomery thanked me, but I think he would rather have had a sonnet; which puts me in mind of Mr. Puff's intended comedy of The Reformed House-breaker, in which he was to put burglary in so ridiculous a point of view, that bolts and bars were likely to become useless by the end of the season.[1] Verily I have no idea of writing verse on a grave subject of utility, any more than of going to church in a cinque pace. Lottery tickets and Japan blacking may indeed be exceptions to the general rule. I am quite delighted at us two cool Scots answering in exactly the same manner, but I am afraid your *sooty men* (who are still in regular discharge of their duty) and my *pope's head* and lined vents will not suit the committee, who seem more anxious for poetry than for common sense. For my part, when I write on such subjects, I intend it shall be a grand historico-philosophico poem upon oil-gas, having been made president of the Oil-gas Company of this city; the whale-fishery might be introduced, and something pretty said about *palm* oil, which we think is apt to be popular among our lawyers. I am very sorry for poor Richardson, so much attached to his wife, and suffering so much in her suffering. I hope

[1] Sheridan's Critic, Act I.

Tom Campbell gets on pretty well, and wish he would do something to sustain his deserved reputation. I wrote with Mrs. Siddons's consent to give Mrs. Hemans's tragedy a trial. I hope that her expectations are not very high, for I do not think our ordinary theatrical audience is either more judicious or less fastidious than those of England. They care little about poetry on the stage—it is situation, passion, and rapidity of action, which seem to be the principal requisites for ensuring the success of a modern drama; but I trust, by dint of a special jury, the piece may have a decent success—certainly I should not hope for much more. I must see they bring it out before 12th March, if possible, as we go to the country that day. I have not seen Mrs. Siddons and her brother William Murray since their obliging answer, for one of my colleagues is laid up with gout, and this gives me long seats in the Court, of which you have reaped the fruits in this long epistle from the Clerk's table, done amid the bustle of pleaders, attorneys, and so forth. I will get a frank, however, if possible, for the matter is assuredly not worth a shilling postage. My kindest remembrances attend Mrs. Baillie and Mrs. Agnes.—Always yours, with sincere respect and affection, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Feb.* 18, 1824.

'MY DEAR TERRY—Your very kind letter reached me here, so that I was enabled to send you immediately an accurate sketch of the windows and chimney-sides of the drawing-room to measurement. I should like the mirrors handsome and the frames plain; the colour of the hangings is green, with rich Chinese figures. On the side of the window I intend to have exactly beneath the glass a plain white side-table of the purest marble, on which to place Chantrey's bust. A truncated pillar of the same marble will be its support; and I think that, besides the mirror above, there will be a plate of mirror below the table; these memoranda will enable Baldock to say at what price

those points can be handsomely accomplished. I have not yet spoken about the marble table; perhaps they may be all got in London. I shall be willing to give a handsome but not an extravagant price. I am much obliged to Mr. Baldock for his confidence about the screen. But what says Poor Richard?[1] 'Those who want money when they come to buy, are apt to want money when they come to pay.' Again poor Dick observes,

> That in many you find the true gentleman's fate;
> Ere his house is complete, he has sold his estate.

So we will adjourn consideration of the screen till other times; let us first have the needful got and paid for. The stuff for the windows in the drawing-room is the crimson damask silk we bought last year. I enclose a scrap of it that the fringe may be made to match. I propose they should be hung with large handsome brass rings upon a brass cylinder, and I believe it would be best to have these articles from London—I mean the rings and cylinders; but I dislike much complication in the mode of drawing them separate, as it is eternally going wrong; those which divide in the middle, drawing back on each side like the curtains of an old-fashioned bed, and when drawn back are secured by a loop and tassel, are, I think, the handsomest, and can easily be made on the spot; the fringe should be silk, of course. I think the curtains of the library, considering the purpose of the room, require no fringe at all. We have, I believe, settled that they shall not be drawn in a line across the recess, as in the drawing-room, but shall circle along the inside of the windows. I refer myself to Mr. Atkinson about the fringe, but I think a little mixture of gold would look handsome with the crimson silk. As for the library, a yellow fringe, if any. I send a draught of the windows enclosed; the architraves are not yet up in the library, but they are accurately computed from the drawings of my kind friend Mr. Atkinson. There is plenty of time to think about these matters, for of course the rooms must

[1] See the works of Dr. Franklin.

be painted before they are put up. I saw the presses yesterday; they are very handsome, and remind me of the awful job of arranging my books. About July, Abbotsford will, I think, be finished, when I shall, like the old Duke of Queensberry who built Drumlanrig, fold up the accounts in a sealed parcel, with a label bidding "the deil pike out the een of any of my successors that shall open it." I beg kind love to Mrs. Terry, Walter the Great, and Missy; delicious weather here, and birds singing St. Valentine's matins as if it were April.—Yours ever, WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—Pride will have a fall—I have a whelp of one of Dandie Dinmont's Pepper and Mustard terriers, which no sooner began to follow me into the house than Ourisque fell foul. The Liddisdale devil cocked its nose, and went up to the scratch like a tigress, downed Ourie, and served her out completely—since which Ourie has been so low that it seems going into an atrophy, and Ginger takes all manner of precedence, as the best place by the fire, and so on, to Lady Scott's great discomfiture. —Single letters by post: double to Croker—with a card enclosed, asking a frank to me.'

About this time Miss Edgeworth announced the approaching marriage of her sister Sophia to Mr. Fox.

'*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.*

'EDINBURGH, *February* 24, 1824.

'MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH—I do not delay a moment to send my warmest and best congratulations upon the very happy event which is about to take place in your family, and to assure you that you do me but common justice in supposing that I take the warmest interest in whatever concerns my young friend. All Abbotsford to an acre of Poyais[1] that she will make an

[1] One of the bubbles of this bubble period was a scheme of colonization at Poyais.

excellent wife; and most truly happy am I to think that she has such an admirable prospect of matrimonial happiness, although at the expense of thwarting the maxim, and showing that

The course of true love *sometimes may* run smooth.

It will make a pretty vista, as I hope and trust, for you, my good friend, to look forwards with an increase of interest to futurity. Lady Scott, Anne, and Sophia send their sincere and hearty congratulations upon this joyful occasion. I hope to hear her sing the *petticoat of red* some day in her own house. I should be apt to pity you a little amid all your happiness, if you had not my friend Miss Harriet, besides other young companions whose merits are only known to me by report, to prevent your feeling so much as you would otherwise the blank which this event must occasion in your domestic society. Sophia, I hope, will be soon able to make her own gratulations; she is recovering very well, and overjoyed to hear such good news from your quarter. I have been on a short trip to Abbotsford, to set painters to work to complete what Slender would call "Mine own great chamber"; and on my return I was quite delighted to see the change on my daughter. Little John Hugh is likewise much better, but will require nursing and care for some years at least. Yet I have often known such hothouse plants bear the open air as well as those that were reared on the open moor.

'I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honourable love of their country and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed

to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling. I have seen a new work, The Pilot, by the author of The Spy and Pioneer. The hero is the celebrated Paul Jones, whom I well remember advancing above the island of Inchkeith with three small vessels to lay Leith under contribution. I remember my mother being alarmed with the drum, which she had heard all her life at eight o'clock, conceiving it to be the pirates who had landed. I never saw such a change as betwixt that time, 1779, in the military state of a city. Then Edinburgh had scarce three companies of men under arms; and latterly she furnished 5000, with complete appointments, of cavalry, artillery, and infantry—enough to have eaten Paul Jones and his whole equipage. Nay, the very square in which my father's house stands could even then have furnished a body of armed men sufficient to have headed back as large a party as he could well have landed. However, the novel is a very clever one, and the sea-scenes and characters in particular are admirably drawn; and I advise you to read it as soon as possible. I have little news to send from Abbotsford; *Spice* is much better, though still asthmatic; she is extremely active, and in high spirits, though the most miserable, thin, long-backed creature I ever saw. She is extremely like the shadow of a dog on the wall; such a sketch as a child makes in its first attempts at drawing a monster—with a large head, four feet, and a most portentous longitude of back. There was great propriety in Miss Harriet's dream after all, for if ever a dog needed six legs, poor Spice certainly requires a pair of additional supporters. She is now following me a little, though the duty of bodyguard has devolved for the present on a cousin of hers, a fierce game devil, that goes at everything, and has cowed Ourisque's courage in a most extraordinary degree, to Lady Scott's great vexation.

Here is a tale of dogs, and dreams, and former days—but the only pleasure in writing is to write whatever comes readiest to the pen. My wife and Anne send kindest compliments of congratulation, as also Charles, who has come down to spend four or five months with us; he is just entered at Brazennose—on fire to be a scholar of classical renown, and studying (I hope the humour will last) like a very dragon.—Always, my dear Miss Edgeworth, with best love to the bride and to dear Harriet, very much yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *March* 13, 1824.

'MY DEAR TERRY—We are now arrived here, and in great bustle with painters, which obliges me to press you about the mirrors. If we cannot have them soon, there is now an excellent assortment at Trotter's, where I can be supplied, for I will hardly again endure to have the house turned upside down by upholsterers—and wish the whole business ended, and the house rid of that sort of cattle once for all. I am only ambitious to have one fine mirror over the chimney-piece; a smaller one will do for the other side of the room. Lady Scott has seen some Bannockburn carpets, which will answer very well, unless there are any bespoken. They are putting up my presses, which look very handsome. In the drawing-room, the cedar doors and windows, being well varnished, assume a most rich and beautiful appearance. The Chinese paper in the drawing-room is most beautiful, saving the two ugly blanks left for these mirrors or d———n, which I daresay you curse as heartily as I do. I wish you could secure a parcel of old caricatures, which can be bought cheap, for the purpose of papering two *cabinets à l'eau*. John Ballantyne used to make great hauls in this way. The Tory side of the question would of course be most acceptable; but I don't care about this, so the prints have some spirit. Excuse this hasty and pressing letter; if you saw the plight we are in, you

would pity and forgive. At Baldock, as I have had at you. My mother whips me, and I whip the top. Best compliments to Mrs. Terry.—Believe me always yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Archibald Constable, Esq., Polton House, Lasswade.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *29th March* 1824.

'My DEAR CONSTABLE—Since I received your letter I have been on the look-out for a companion for you, and have now the pleasure to send one bred at Abbotsford of a famous race. His name has hitherto been Cribb, but you may change it if you please. I will undertake for his doing execution upon the rats, which Polton was well stocked with when I knew it some seventeen or eighteen years ago. You must take some trouble to attach Mr. Cribb, otherwise he will form low connexions in the kitchen, which are not easily broken off. The best and most effectual way is to feed him yourself for a few days.

'I congratulate you heartily, my good old friend, on your look-forward to domestic walks and a companion of this sort; and I have no doubt your health will gradually be confirmed by it. I will take an early opportunity to see you when we return to Edinburgh. I like the banks of the Esk, which to me are full of many remembrances, among which those relating to poor Leyden must come home to you as well as to me. I am ranging in my improvements—painting my baronial hall with all the scutcheons of the border clans, and many similar devices. For the roof-tree I tried to blazon my own quarterings, and succeeded easily with eight on my father's side; but on my mother's side I stuck fast at the mother of my great-great-grandfather. The ancestor himself was John Rutherford of Grundisnock, which is an appanage of the Hunthill estate, and he was married to Isabel Ker of Bloodylaws. I think I have heard that either this John of Grundisnock or his father was one of the nine sons of the celebrated Cock of Hunthill, who seems to have had a reasonable brood of chickens. Do you know anything

of the pedigree of the Hunthills? The Earl of Teviot was of a younger branch, Rutherford of Quarrelholes, but of the same family. If I could find out these Rutherfords, and who they married, I could complete my tree, which is otherwise correct; but if not, I will paint clouds on these three shields, with the motto *Vixerunt fortes ante.* These things are trifles when correct, but very absurd and contemptible if otherwise. Edgerstane cannot help me; he only knows that my grandfather was a cousin of his—and you know he represents Hunthill. My poor mother has often told me about it, but it was to regardless ears. Would to God I had old Mrs. Keddie of Leith, who screeded off all the alliances between the Andersons of Ettrick House and the Andersons of Ettrick Hall, though Michael was the name of every second man, and, to complete the mess, they intermarried with each other. —Yours truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

A bad accident in a fox-chase occurred at this time to Sir Walter's dear friend Mr. Scott of Gala. The icehouse at Abbotsford was the only one in the neighbourhood that had been filled during the preceding winter, and to Tom Purdie's care in that particular, Mr. Scott's numerous friends owed the preservation of his valuable life.

'*To the Lord Montagu, etc., Ditton Park.*

'EDINBURGH, 14*th April* 1824.

'MY DEAR LORD—You might justly think me most unmerciful, were you to consider this letter as a provoke requiring an answer. It comes partly to thank you twenty times for your long and most kind letter, and partly, which I think not unnecessary, to tell you that Gala may now, I trust, be considered as quite out of danger. He has swum for his life though, and barely saved it. It is for the credit of the clan to state that he had no dishonour as a horseman by his fall. He had alighted to put his saddle to rights, and the horse, full of corn and little work, went off with him before he got into his seat, and

went headlong down a sort of precipice. He fell at least fifteen feet without stopping, and no one that saw the accident could hope he should be taken up a living man. Yet, after losing a quart of blood, he walked home on foot, and no dangerous symptoms appeared till five or six days after, when they came with a vengeance. He continues to use the ice with wonderful effect, though it seems a violent remedy.

'How fate besets us in our sports and in our most quiet domestic moments! Your Lordship's story of the lamp makes one shudder, and I think it wonderful that Lady Montagu felt no more bad effects from the mere terror of such an accident; but the gentlest characters have often most real firmness. I once saw something of the kind upon a very large scale. You may have seen at Somerset House an immense bronze chandelier with several hundred burners, weighing three or four tons at least. On the day previous to the public exhibition of the paintings, the Royal Academicians are in use, as your Lordship knows, to give an immensely large dinner-party to people of distinction, supposed to be patrons of the art, to literary men, to amateurs in general, and the Lord knows whom besides. I happened to be there the first time this ponderous mass of bronze was suspended. It had been cast for his Majesty, then Prince Regent, and he not much liking it—I am surprised he did not, as it is very ugly indeed—had bestowed it on the Royal Academicians. Beneath it was placed, as at Ditton, a large round table, or rather a tier of tables, rising above each other like the shelves of a dumb-waiter, and furnished with as many glasses, tumblers, decanters, and so forth, as might have set up an entire glass shop—the numbers of the company, upwards of 150 persons, requiring such a supply. Old West presided, and was supported by Jockey of Norfolk on the one side, and one of the royal Dukes on the other. We had just drunk a preliminary toast or two, when—the Lord preserve us!—a noise was heard like that which precedes an earthquake—the links of the massive chain by which this beastly lump of bronze was suspended, began

to give way, and the mass descending slowly for several inches, encountered the table beneath, which was positively annihilated by the pressure, the whole glass-ware being at once destroyed. What was very odd, the chain, after this manifestation of weakness, continued to hold fast; the skilful inspected it and declared it would yield no farther —and we, I think to the credit of our courage, remained quiet, and continued our sitting. Had it really given way, as the architecture of Somerset House has been in general esteemed unsubstantial, it must have broke the floor like a bombshell, and carried us all down to the cellars of that great national edifice. Your Lordship's letter placed the whole scene in my recollection. A fine paragraph we should have made.[1]

'I think your Lordship will be much pleased with the fine plantation on Bowden Moor. I have found an excellent legend for the spot. It is close by the grave of an unhappy being, called *Wattie Waeman* (whether the last appellative was really his name, or has been given him from his melancholy fate, is uncertain), who being all for love and a little for stealing, hung himself there seventy or eighty years since (*quere*, where did he find a tree?) at once to revenge himself of his mistress and to save the gallows a labour. Now, as the place of his grave and of his suicide is just on the verge where the Duke's land meets with mine and Kippilaw's—(you are aware that where three lairds' lands meet is always a charmed spot)—the spirit of Wattie Waeman wanders sadly over the adjacent moors, to the great terror of all wandering wights who have occasion to pass from Melrose to Bowden. I begin to think which of his namesakes this omen concerns, for I take Walter Kerr of Kippilaw to be out of the question. I never heard of a Duke actually dying for love, though the Duke in the Twelfth Night be in an alarming way. On the other hand, Sir John Græme of the West Countrie, who died for cruel Barbara Allan, is a

[1] This story is also told in Scott's Essay on the Life of Kemble. See Quarterly Review, No. 67, or Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx. pp. 195-7.

case in point against the Knight. Thus, in extreme cases, your Duke loses his head, whereas your Knight or Esquire is apt to retain it upon a neck a little more elongated than usual. I will pursue the discussion no further, as the cards appear to turn against me. The people begin to call the plantation Waeman's Wood—rather a good name.

'It is quite impossible your Lordship should be satisfied with the outside view of my castle, for I reckon upon the honour of receiving your whole party, *quotquot adestis*, as usual, in the interior. We have plenty of room for a considerable number of friends at bed as well as board. Do not be alarmed by the report of the gas, which was quite true, but reflects no dishonour on that mode of illumination. I had calculated that fifteen hundred cubic feet of gas would tire out some five-and-twenty or thirty pair of feet of Scotch dancers, but it lasted only till six in the morning, and then, as a brave soldier does on his post, went out when burned out. Had I kept the man sitting up for an hour or two to make the gas as fast as consumed, I should have spoiled a good story.

'My hall is in the course of having all the heavy parts of my armorial collection bestowed upon it, and really, though fanciful, looks very well, and I am as busy as a bee, disposing suits of armour, battle-axes, broadswords, and all the nick-nacks I have been breaking my shins over in every corner of the house for these seven years past, in laudable order and to the best advantage.

'If Mr. Blakeney be the able person that fame reports him, he will have as great a duty to perform as his ancestor at Stirling Castle;[1] for to keep so young a person as my chief, in his particular situation, from the inroads of follies, and worse than follies, requires as much attention and firmness as to keep Highland claymores and French engineers out of a fortified place. But there is an admirable garrison in the fortress—kind and generous feelings, and a strong sense of honour and duty which Duke Walter

[1] General Blakeney, grandfather to Lord M.'s friend, was governor of Stirling Castle in 1745.

has by descent from his father and grandfather. God send him life and health, and I trust he will reward your Lordship's paternal care, and fulfil my hopes. They are not of the lowest, but such as must be entertained by an old and attached friend of the family who has known him from infancy. My friend Lord John wants the serious responsibility of his brother's situation, and may afford to sow a few more wild oats, but I trust he will not make the crop a large one. Lord * * * * and his tutor have just left us for the south, after spending three or four days with us. They could not have done worse than sending the young Viscount to Edinburgh, for though he is really an unaffected natural young man, yet it was absurd to expect that he should study hard when he had no temptations for every hour of every evening. I am more and more convinced of the excellence of the English academic institutions of Cambridge and Oxford. They cannot do all that may be expected, but there is at least the exclusion of many temptations to dissipation of mind; whereas with us, supposing a young man to have any pretensions to keep good society—and, to say truth, we are not very nice in investigating them—he is almost pulled to pieces by speculating mammas and flirting misses. If a man is poor, plain, and indifferently connected, he may have excellent opportunities of study at Edinburgh: otherwise he should beware of it.

'Lady Anne is very naughty not to take care of herself, and I am not sorry she has been a little ill, that it may be a warning. I wish to hear your Ladyship's well at Bath. I hate unformed complaints. A doctor is like Ajax—give him light, and he may make battle with a disease; but, no disparagement to the Esculapian art, they are bad guessers. My kindest compliments. I had almost said *love*, attend Lady Isabella. We are threatened with a cruel deprivation in the loss of our friend Sir Adam, the first of men. A dog of a banker must have his house for an investment of capital, and I fear he must trudge. Had I still had the Highland property in my

[1] John of Ellon had left Abbotsford—to be under contract

service, who would not have refused me such a favour, I would have had him dirked to a certainty—I mean this cursed banker. As it is, I must think of some means of poisoning his hot rolls and butter, or setting his house on fire, by way of revenge. It is a real affliction. I am happy to hear of Lady Margaret's good looks. I was one of her earliest acquaintance, and at least half her godfather, for I took the vows on me for somebody or other, who, I daresay, has never thought half so often of her as I have done. And so I have written out my paper, and, I fear, your Lordship's patience. My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu and the young ladies of Ditton.—Always most truly yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The estate of Gattonside was purchased about this time by Mr. George Bainbridge of Liverpool—and Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson, to Scott's great regret, went a year or two afterwards to another part of Scotland. The 'cursed banker,' however, had only to be known to be liked and esteemed. Mr. Bainbridge had, among other merits, great skill in sports—especially in that which he has illustrated by the excellent manual entitled 'The Fly-fisher's Guide'; and Gattonside-house speedily resumed its friendly relations with Abbotsford.

The next letter was in answer to one in which Lord Montagu had communicated his difficulties about fixing to which of the English Universities he should send the young Duke of Buccleuch.

'*To the Lord Montagu, etc. etc.*

'EDINBURGH, 15*th June* 1824.

'MY DEAR LORD—I was much interested by your Lordship's last letter. For some certain reasons I rather prefer Oxford to Cambridge, chiefly because the last great University was infected long ago with liberalism in politics, and at present shows some symptoms of a very different heresy, which is yet sometimes blended with the

first — I mean enthusiasm in religion — not that sincere zeal for religion, in which mortals cannot be too fervid, but the far more doubtful enthusiasm which makes religion a motive and a pretext for particular lines of thinking in politics and in temporal affairs. This is a spirit which, while it has abandoned the lower classes—where perhaps it did some good, for it *is* a guard against gross and scandalous vice — has transferred itself to the upper classes, where, I think, it can do little but evil,—disuniting families, setting children in opposition to parents, and teaching, as I think, a new way of going to the Devil for God's sake. On the other hand, this is a species of doctrine not likely to carry off our young friend; and I am sure Mr. Blakeney's good sense will equally guard him against political mistakes—for I should think my friend Professor Smyth's historical course of lectures likely to be somewhat Whiggish, though I daresay not improperly so. Upon the whole, I think the reasons your Lordship's letter contains in favour of Cambridge are decisive, although I may have a private wish in favour of Christ Church, which I daresay will rear its head once more under the new Dean.[1] The neighbourhood of Newmarket is certainly in some sort a snare for so young persons as attend college at Cambridge: but, alas! where is it that there be not snares of one kind or other? Parents, and those who have the more delicate task of standing in the room of parents, must weigh objections and advantages, and without expecting to find any that are without risk, must be content to choose those where the chances seem most favourable. The turf is no doubt a very forceful temptation, especially to a youth of high rank and fortune. There is something very flattering in winning, when good fortune depends so much on shrewdness of observation, and, as it is called, knowingness; the very sight is of an agitating character; and perhaps there are few things more fascinating to young men, whose large fortune excludes the ordinary causes of solicitude, than the pleasures and risks of the race-course; and though, when indulged to excess, it

[1] Dr. Samuel Smith became Dean of Christ Church in 1824.

leads to very evil consequences, yet, if the Duke hereafter should like to have a stud of racers, he might very harmlessly amuse himself in that way, provided he did not suffer it to take too eager possession of his mind, or to engross his time. Certainly one would rather he had not the turn at all, but I am far more afraid of sedentary games of chance, for wasting time and fortune, than I am of any active out-of-doors sport whatsoever.

'Old Paradise did not number a neighbourhood among its pleasures; but Gattonside has that advantage, and great will be the regret of the said neighbours if Sir Adam and Lady Eve are turned out. I parted with them at Blair-Adam on this day—for taking a fit of what waiting maids call *the clevers*, I started at six this morning, and got here to breakfast. As it blew hard all night, there was a great swell on the ferry, so that I came through

> Like Chieftain to the Highlands bound,
> Crying, 'Boatman, do not tarry'—[1]

or rather,

> Like Clerk unto the Session bound.

'I could have borne a worse toss, and even a little danger, since the wind brought rain, which is so much wanted. One set of insects is eating the larch—another the spruce. Many of the latter will not, I think, recover the stripping they are receiving. Crops are looking well, except the hay, which is not looking at all. The sheep are eating roasted grass, but will not be the worse mutton, as I hope soon to prove to your Lordship at Abbotsford. —I am always, my dear Lord,

'Yours faithful to command,

'WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—I am here, according to the old saying, *bird-alane;* for my son Charles is fishing at Lochleven, and my wife and daughter (happy persons!) are at Abbotsford. I took the opportunity to spend two days at Tyninghame. Lord Haddington complains of want of memory, while

[1] Campbell's 'Lord Ullin's Daughter.'

his conversation is as witty as a comedy, and his anecdote as correct as a parish register.[1]

'I will be a suitor for a few acorns this year, if they ripen well at Ditton, or your other forests. Those I had before from you (raised in the nursery, not planted out) are now fine oak plants.'

Among Scott's visitors of the next month, first in Edinburgh, and afterwards on Tweedside, were the late amiable and venerable Dr. Hughes, one of the Canons-residentiary of St. Paul's, and his warm-hearted lady. The latter had been numbered among his friends from an early period of life, and a more zealously affectionate friend he never possessed. On her way to Scotland she had halted at Keswick to visit Mr. Southey, whom also she had long known well, and corresponded with frequently. Hence the following letters.

'*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.*

'My dear Southey—Do you remember Richardson's metaphor of two bashful lovers running opposite to each other in parallel lines, without the least chance of union, until some good-natured body gives a shove to the one, and a shove to the other, and so leads them to form a junction? Two lazy correspondents may, I think, form an equally apt subject for the simile, for here have you and I been silent for I know not how many years, for no other reason than the uncertainty which wrote last, or which was in duty bound to write first. And here comes my clever, active, bustling friend Mrs. Hughes, and tells me that you regret a silence which I have not the least power of accounting for, except upon the general belief that I wrote you a long epistle after your kind present of the Lay of the Laureate, and that I have once every week proposed to write you a still longer, till shame of my own

[1] Charles, eighth Earl of Haddington—remarkable for the graces of his person and the humour of his conversation—died in March 1828, aged 76.

indolence confirmed me in my evil habits of procrastination —when here comes good Mrs. Hughes, gives me a shake by the collar, and assures me that you are in pretty nearly the same case with myself—and, as a very slight external impulse will sometimes drive us into action when a long succession of internal resolutions have been made and broke, I take my pen to assure my dear Southey that I love him as well as if our correspondence had been weekly or daily.

'The years which have gone by have found me dallying with the time, and you improving it as usual—I tossing my ball and driving my hoop, a grey-headed schoolboy, and you plying your task unremittingly for the instruction of our own and future ages. Yet I have not been wholly idle or useless—witness five hundred acres of moor and moss, now converted into hopeful woodland of various sizes, to the great refreshment, even already, of the eyes of the pilgrims who still journey to Melrose. I wish you could take a step over the Border this season with Mrs. Southey, and let us have the pleasure of showing you what I have been doing. I twice intended an invasion of this sort upon your solitude at Keswick—one in spring 1821, and then again in the summer of the same year when the coronation took place. But the convenience of going to London by the steam-packet, which carries you on whether you wake or sleep, is so much preferable to a long land journey, that I took it on both occasions. The extreme rapidity of communication, which places an inhabitant of Edinburgh in the metropolis sooner than a letter can reach it by the post, is like to be attended with a mass of most important consequences—some, or rather most of them good, but some also which are not to be viewed without apprehension. It must make the public feeling and sentiment of London, whatever that may chance to be, much more readily and emphatically influential upon the rest of the kingdom, and I am by no means sure that it will be on the whole desirable that the whole country should be as subject to be moved by its example as the inhabitants of its suburbs. Admitting the

metropolis to be the heart of the system, it is no sign of health when the blood flows too rapidly through the system at every pulsation. Formerly, in Edinburgh and other towns, the impulse received from any strong popular feeling in London was comparatively slow and gradual, and had to contend with opposite feelings and prejudices of a national or provincial character; the matter underwent a reconsideration, and the cry which was raised in the great mart of halloo and humbug was not instantly echoed back, as it may be in the present day and present circumstances, when our opinion, like a small drop of water brought into immediate contiguity with a bigger, is most likely to be absorbed in and united with that of the larger mass. However, you and I have outlived so many real perils, that it is not perhaps wise to dread those that are only contingent, especially where the cause out of which they arise brings with it so much absolute and indisputable advantage.

'What is Wordsworth doing? I was unlucky in being absent when he crossed the Border. I heartily wish I could induce him to make a foray this season, and that you and Mrs. Southey, and Miss Wordsworth, my very good and well-remembered friend, could be of the party. Pray think of this, for the distance is nothing to well-resolved minds, and you in particular owe me a visit. I have never quite forgiven your tour in Scotland without looking in upon my poor premises. Well, as I have re-appeared like your floating island, which I see the newspapers aver hath again, after seven years' soaking, become visible to mortal ken, it would not be fair in me to make my visit too long a one—so, with kindest respects to Mrs. Southey, in which my wife sincerely joins, I am always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.

'8th July 1824, Edinburgh.

'Address Abbotsford, Melrose.

'You may have heard that about four years since I was brought to death's door by a violent, and at the same

time most obstinate complaint—a sort of spasms in the stomach or diaphragm, which for a long time defied medicine. It gave way at length to a terrific course of calomel, such as made the cure almost as bad as the disease. Since that time, I have recovered even a better portion of health than I generally had before, and that was excellent. I do not indeed possess the activity of former days, either on foot or horseback, but while I can ride a pony, and walk five or six miles with pleasure, I have no reason to complain. The rogue Radicals had nearly set me on horseback again, but I would have had a good *following* to help out my own deficiencies, as all my poor neighbours were willing to fight for *Kirk* and *King*.'

Mr. Southey's next letter enclosed a MS. copy of his Ode on the King's Northern Progress of 1822. Sir Walter, in his reply, adverts to the death of Louis XVIII., which occurred on the 17th of September 1824—and prophesies the fate of his successor.

'*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.*

'BOWHILL, *26th Sept.* 1824.

'MY DEAR SOUTHEY—I did not immediately thank you for your beautiful poem on the King's Visit, because I was afraid you might think that I was trespassing too much on time which is always well employed; but I must not let the ice settle again on the stream of our correspondence, and therefore, while I have a quiet morning, I employ part of it to thank you for the kindness you have done me as a friend, and still more for the honour you have bestowed on my country. I hope these verses are one day to see the light, and am too much personally interested not to expect that period with impatience.

'I had a letter from Gifford some time since, by which I perceive with regret he renounces further management of the Quarterly. I scarce guess what can be done by Murray in that matter, unless he could prevail on you to

take the charge. No work of the kind can make progress (though it may be kept afloat) under a mere bookselling management. And the difficulty of getting a person with sufficient independence of spirit, accuracy of judgment, and extent of knowledge, to exercise the profession of Aristarch, seems very great. Yet I have been so long out of the London circles that new stars may have arisen, and set for aught I know, since I was occasionally within the hemisphere.

'The King of France's death, with which one would think I had wondrous little to do, has produced to me the great disappointment of preventing Canning's visit. He had promised to spend two or three days at Abbotsford on his road to Edinburgh,[1] and it is the more provoking, as I daresay, after all, there is no farther occasion for his being at his post than arises from matter of mere form, since I suppose there is no reason to think that Charles X. will change the line of policy adopted by his brother. I remember him in Edinburgh about 1794, one of the most elegant men in address and exterior whom I ever saw. Strange times we have lived in! I am speaking of Charles X. as a Frenchman of 1661 might have spoken of Charles II. By the way, did you ever observe how easy it would be for a good historian to run a parallel betwixt the great Rebellion and the French Revolution, just substituting the spirit of fanaticism for that of *soi-disant* philosophy? But then how the character of the English would rise—whether you considered the talents and views of the great leaders on either side, or the comparative moderation and humanity with which they waged their warfare! I sometimes think an instructive comparative view might be made out, and it would afford a comfortable augury that the Restoration in either case was followed by many amendments in the Constitution. I hope Louis Baboon will not carry the matter so far as to

[1] Mr. Canning spent some part of the summer of 1824 in a visit to the Marquess Wellesley, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; and had proposed to return from Dublin by the way of Scotland. I think there was to have been a public dinner in his honour at Edinburgh.

require completing the parallel by a second Revolution—but it would be very singular if the devotion of this King to the Catholic priests and forms should occasion such a catastrophe. Heber has promised to come down here, and if so, I will perhaps return with him as far as Rokeby, and, if we can, take Keswick on our way, were it but to see you for an hour. All this, however, is speculation. I am just sending off my younger son to Oxford. My eldest is an officer in the 15th Hussars, and I believe will soon get that object of every young officer's ambition, a troop, which would be great luck.—Believe me, dear Southey, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

In October of this year, Sir Walter's son Charles began his residence at Brazen-nose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping the appointment in the civil service of the East-India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in the spring of 1820; a step, I need not observe, which, were there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove, to the conviction of the most envious sceptic, that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writership in India is early independence;—in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance.

The Vicar of Lampeter, meanwhile, had become a candidate for the rectorship of a new classical academy, founded this year at Edinburgh; and Sir Walter Scott's influence was zealously exerted in behalf of his son's learned and estimable tutor. Mr. Williams was successful in his object; and at the opening of the institution

(1st October) the Poet appeared in Edinburgh to preside over the ceremonial in which this excellent friend was so deeply concerned. I transcribe what follows from a report prepared at the time (but never until now published) by the honorary secretary of the academy, Mr. John Russell, W.S.:—

The Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart.[1] (minister of the parish), at the request of Sir Walter Scott, opened the business of the meeting, by an eloquent and impressive prayer, in which he invoked the blessing of the Almighty on the Institution.

Sir Walter Scott then rose, and observed, that it had been determined by the Directors, that some account should be given on this occasion of the nature and meaning of the Institution. He wished that some one better qualified had been appointed for this purpose; but as the duty had been imposed upon him, he should endeavour to discharge it as briefly as possible. In Scotland, and before such an assembly, it was unnecessary for him to enlarge on the general advantages of education. It was that which distinguished man from the lower animals in the creation—which recorded every fact of history, and transmitted them in perfect order from one generation to another. Our forefathers had shown their sense of its importance by their conduct; but they could little have conceived the length to which discoveries in science and literature had gone in this age; and those now present could as little anticipate to what extent posterity might carry them. Future ages might probably speak of the knowledge of the 18th and 19th centuries, as we now do of that of the 15th and 16th. But let them remember that the progress of knowledge was gradual; and as their ancestors had been anxious to secure to them the benefits of education, so let it be said of the present age, that it paved the way for the improvement of the generations which were to follow. He need not repeat to Scotsmen, that at an early period the most anxious solicitude had been shown on this subject. While Scotland was torn with convulsions, and the battle-brand was yet red, our forefathers had sat down to devise the means of spreading the blessings of knowledge among their posterity, as the most effectual means of preventing those dark and bloody times from recurring. We had but lately sheathed a triumphant sword, and lived now in a period of profound peace; and long, long might it be before the sword was again unsheathed! This was therefore a proper time for improving the institutions of the country, and endeavouring to cause its literature to keep pace with its high martial achievements. In forming an institution like the present, there was something generous and disinterested. The founders of a library might enjoy the benefit of reading in that library—the founder of an hospital had had some-

[1] This venerable clergyman died 9th August 1827, aged 77.

times the melancholy gratification, in the decline of his fortunes, of reposing under the roof of the asylum which his charity had erected for others: but such could not be the case with those who subscribed for this institution. It was like a torch held out in the hand of a dead man, which imparted light to others, but to the bearer it gave none. He therefore called on the young to attend to the instructions that would be addressed to them in this Academy, erected exclusively for their benefit, and not for that of those by whom it had been founded.

The establishment of those excellent institutions, the Parochial Schools, had early induced the moral and orderly habits which had so much tended to raise the character of our countrymen. King James, whatever had been his failings in other respects, had attended to the education of the youth, and had founded an institution (the High School), which flourished at this moment, the pride and boast of our City; but, from the great increase of population, its size was now found inadequate to the duty originally intended. Since its establishment, the city had increased to six times the extent it then was; and the great number of subscribers to the present Institution proved the general feeling that something must be done to relieve the Metropolitan school. It was true there were many private seminaries, whose teachers were men of great talent; but schools of that description were not so well calculated to secure the education of children as an institution like the present. It was plain to the most common understanding, that one man could not teach four or five classes of pupils with the same success that one man could teach one class; that was quite plain. A jealousy had been entertained that the design of the present institution was to hurt the more ancient seminary. Look at those who were the leading members of this society;—many of them who had received their education at the High School, whose fathers and grandfathers had been instructed there, and who also had their children there: they were not capable of entertaining a thought to the prejudice of that seminary. The effect of the present institution would only be to relieve the High School of superfluous scholars, and thereby leave the hands of its teachers more at liberty to educate those who were left. He trusted he should hear nothing more of such an unworthy motive. He was sure there would be no petty jealousies —no rivalry between the two institutions, but the honourable and fair rivalry of scholarship. He was convinced Palinurus would not slumber at the helm, while he beheld another vessel striving to gain the port before him.

In appropriating the funds which had so liberally been placed at their disposal, the Directors had observed the strictest economy. By the ingenuity of Mr. Burn the Architect, whose plans for, and superintendence of the buildings, had been a labour of love, it would be observed, that not much had been lost. If they had not the beauty of lavish ornament, they had it least taste and proportion to boast of—a more important part of architecture than high finishing.—The Directors had a more difficult and delicate duty to perform than

the rearing of stone walls, in choosing the gentlemen who were to carry into execution their plans; a task important beyond the power of language to describe, from the number of certificates produced by men of talent who were willing to abandon their situations in other seminaries, and to venture the credit of their reputation and prospects in life on this experimental project of ours—a task so delicate, that the Directors were greatly at a loss whom to choose among seventy or eighty individuals, of almost equal merit, and equally capable of undertaking the task. The one principle which guided the Directors in their selection was—who were most likely to give satisfaction to them and to the public? He trusted they had been successful in the performance of this task. The University of Oxford has given them one of its most learned scholars (the Rector), in the flower of his age, with fifteen years' experience as a teacher, and of whose acquirements, in that gentleman's presence, he would not speak in the terms he would employ elsewhere. To him the Directors trusted as the main pillar of the establishment: he was sure also, he would be well supported by the other gentlemen; and that the whole machine would move easily and smoothly.

But there was still another selection of no mean difficulty. In the formation of a new, they must lose some of the advantages of an ancient and venerable institution. One could not lay his hands on the head of his son, and say, this is the same bench on which I sat; this is the voice which first instructed me.—They had to identify their children with a new institution. But they had something to counterbalance these disadvantages. If they had not the venerable Gothic temple, the long sounding galleries, and turreted walls—where every association was favourable to learning—they were also free from the prejudices peculiar to such seminaries,—the 'rich windows which *exclude* the light, and passages that lead to nothing.' Something might be gained from novelty. The attention of the Directors had been particularly turned to the fact, that while Scotland was, on the whole, the best informed country in Europe, it had not of late produced many eminent classical scholars. The observation of Dr. Johnson was well known, that in learning, Scotland resembled a besieged city, where every man had a mouthful, but no man a bellyful. It might be said, in answer to this, that it was better education should be divided in mouthfuls, than served up at the banquet of some favoured individuals, while the great mass were left to starve. But, sturdy Scotsman as he was, he was not more attached to Scotland than to truth; and it must be admitted that there was some foundation for the Doctor's remark. The Directors were anxious to wipe off this reproach, and for this purpose had made every provision in their power. They had made some additions to the course adopted in the High School, but in no case had they made any innovation from the mere love of change. It was a part of their plan to lay a foundation for a thorough knowledge of the Latin tongue, by the most precise and careful study of its elemental principles. With this they meant to conjoin the study of Greek, to be begun at an earlier period, and

prosecuted to a greater extent, than hitherto was customary in Scotland. It was the language of the fathers of history, and of a people whose martial achievements and noble deeds were the ornament of their pages. At no moment was the study of that beautiful language so interesting as at present, when the people among whom it was still in use, were again, as he trusted, about to emancipate themselves from slavery and barbarism, and take their rank among free nations. There would also be instruction in Writing and Arithmetic—and a class for the study of Mathematics, from which the Directors hoped great advantage would accrue to the pupils. There would be another class in this institution, which was not to be found in any other similar academy—a class for the study of English Literature. It had been justly remarked that the study of classics had sometimes led to the neglect of our own language, and that some scholars could express themselves better in Latin than in English. To avoid this error, a teacher was added to the institution, who was to instruct the boys in the principles of English Composition, and to connect with this a knowledge of the history of their own country. He would have the youths taught to venerate the patriots and heroes of our own country, along with those of Greece and Rome; to know the histories of Wallace and Bruce, as well as those of Themistocles and of Cæsar; and that the recollection of the fields of Flodden and Bannockburn should not be lost in those of Platæa and Marathon. The Masters would open their classes every morning with prayer; and a portion of Scripture would be read by one of the boys every Monday morning, before the commencement of the week's labours.

In conclusion, Sir Walter addressed a few words to his young friends around him. He observed, that the public could not have given a more interesting mark of their confidence in the Managers of the Seminary, than they had done, in placing under their direction these young persons, characterised by the Roman matron as her most precious jewels, for every one of whom he was sensible more than one bosom was at present beating, anxious for their future happiness and prosperity. He exhorted them to give their whole souls and minds to their studies, without which it was little that either their Teachers or Directors could do. If they were destined for any of the learned professions, he begged them to remember that a physician without learning was a mere quack; a lawyer without learning was a pettifogger; and a clergyman without learning was like a soldier without a sword, who had not the means of enforcing the authority of his Divine Master. Next to a conscience void of offence towards God and man, the greatest possession they could have was a well-cultivated mind; it was that alone which distinguished them from the beasts that perish. If they went to India or other distant quarters of the globe, it would sweeten their path and add to their happiness. He trusted that his words, poor as they were, would sink into their hearts, and remain on their memories, long after they had forgotten the speaker. He hoped they would remember the words of their reverend friend, who had just implored the blessing of God upon their studies,

for they were the outpourings of the soul of one not young in years, nor void of experience; and when they were come to manhood, they might say to their children, 'Thus and thus were we taught, and thus and thus we teach you. By attending to these things we rose to honour and distinction.' Happy (said Sir Walter) will it be if you can say, 'I have followed that which I heard.' May you do so and live!

The Academy, opened under these auspices, throve from the beginning, and may now be considered as one of the most important among the national establishments of Scotland; nor have Sir Walter's anticipations as to the result of honourable rivalry between it and the old High School been disappointed.

As it happens, I have to place in the same page with Sir Walter's speech in honour of classical learning, the record of a *false quantity* which his generosity may almost be said to have made classical. In the course of that same October, died his faithful friend and servant Maida, the noblest and most celebrated of all his dogs—might I not safely say of all dogs that ever shared the fellowship of man? His exit was announced in this letter to the young Oxonian:—

'*To Charles Scott, Esq., Brazen-nose College, Oxford.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *22nd October* 1824.

'MY DEAR CHARLES—I am glad to hear that you are safely settled at College, I trust with the intention of making your residence there subservient to the purposes of steady study, without which it will only be a waste of expense and of leisure. I believe the matter depends very much on a youth himself, and therefore I hope to hear that you are strenuously exerting yourself to hold an honourable situation among the students of your celebrated university. Your course will not be unmarked, as something is expected from the son of any literary person; and I sincerely hope in this case those expectations will be amply gratified.

'I am obliged to Mr. Hughes[1] for his kind intentions

[1] John Hughes, Esq. of Oriel College—son of Sir Walter's old friends, Dr. and Mrs. Hughes—the same whose 'Itinerary of the

in your favour, as I daresay that any to whom he introduces you will be acquaintance worth cultivating. I shall be glad to hear that you have taken up your ground at College, and who are like to compose your set. I hope you will make your way to the clever fellows, and not put up with Doldrums. Every man soon falls behind that does not aspire to keep up with the foremost in the race.

'I have little domestic news to tell you. Old Maida died quietly in his straw last week, after a good supper, which, considering his weak state, was rather a deliverance. He is buried below his monument, on which the following epitaph is engraved—though it is great audacity to send Teviotdale Latin to Brazen-nose—

> Maidæ Marmoreâ dormis sub imagine Maida,
> Ad januam domini sit tibi terra levis.

'Thus Englished by an eminent hand,—

> Beneath the sculptured form which late you wore,
> Sleep soundly, Maida, at your master's door.

'Yesterday we had our solemn hunt, and killed fourteen hares,—but a dog of Sir Adam's broke her leg, and was obliged to be put to death in the field. Little Johnnie talks the strangest gibberish I ever heard, by way of repeating his little poems. I wish the child may ever speak plain. Mamma, Sophia, Anne, and I, send love.—Always your affectionate father,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

The monument here mentioned was a *leaping-on-stone*, to which the skill of Scott's master-mason had given the shape of Maida recumbent. It had stood by the gate of Abbotsford a year or more before the dog died, and after he was laid under it, his master, dining that evening at

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Rhone' is mentioned with high praise in the Introduction to Quentin Durward.—In a poem by Mr. Hughes, entitled *Walter Childe*, published in 1838, the reader will find an elegant and affectionate tribute to Sir Walter Scott's memory. See Bentley's Miscellany, No. xvii. p. 433.

Chiefswood, said, over his glass of toddy and cigar, that he had been bothering his brains to make an epitaph for his ancient favourite, but could not please himself. He said it must be in Latin, because *Maida* seemed made on purpose to close a hexameter—and begged, as I was fresher off the irons than himself, that I would try to help him. The unfortunate couplet above printed was what suggested itself at the moment—and though his own English version of it, extemporized next minute, was so much better, on his way home he gave directions to have it engraved, and engraved it was before many hours had passed. Mr. James Ballantyne was the first person that saw it; believing it to be Scott's, he admired it, of course—and of course, also, he thought fit to print it soon after (as Sir Walter's) in his newspaper—but his memory had played him a trick before he reached Edinburgh, and as he printed the lines they showed not only their original blunder, but another of his own creation; he had put *jaces* for *dormis*. His printing the thing at all was unfortunate; for some friend (I believe it was Lord Minto) had pointed out in the interim the false quantity of *januam*, and the mason was just about to rectify that by substituting some legitimate dactyl or spondee, suggested by this critic, when the newspaper reached Abbotsford. Sir Walter on seeing it said,—'Well, well, since Ballantyne has printed the lines at all, I shan't have any corrections made here—I shall write and tell him of *his* blunder, and let the other stand as it is.' But meantime '*Sir Walter Scott's false quantities*' had headed various paragraphs in the newspapers both in Edinburgh and in London; and, strange to say, even the undoubted double blunder of Ballantyne's edition found gallant defenders. A Mr. Lionel Berguer, who, I think, had published some poems, and dedicated them to Scott, was one of these champions: and Sir Walter himself had twice pleaded guilty in the newspapers, before the matter was allowed to rest. It is sufficient to quote the following:—

'*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Nov.* 12, 1824.

'SIR—As I am a friend to truth, even in trifles, I cannot consent to shelter myself under the classical mantle which Mr. LIONEL BERGUER and some unknown friend have chosen to extend, in their charity, over my faults in prosody. The two lines were written in mere whim, and without the least intention of their being made public. In the first line, the word *jaces* is a mistake of the transcriber (whoever took that trouble); the phrase is *dormis*, which I believe is good prosody. The error in the second line, *ad januam*, certainly exists, and I bow to the castigation. I must plead the same apology which was used by the great Dr. JOHNSON, when he misinterpreted a veterinary phrase of ordinary occurrence—'ignorance—pure ignorance' was the cause of my blunder. Forty years ago, longs and shorts were little attended to in Scottish education; and I have, it appears, forgot the little I may then have learned. I have only to add, that I am far from undervaluing any branch of scholarship because I have not the good fortune to possess it, and heartily wish that those who succeed us may have the benefit of a more accurate classical education than was common in my earlier days.

'The inscription cannot now be altered; but if it remains a memorial of my want of learning, it shall not, in addition, convey any imputation on my candour. I should have been ashamed, at a more stirring time, to ask admission for this plea of guilty; but at present you may think it worth a place in your paper. *Pugna est de paupere regno.*—I remain your obedient servant, WALTER SCOTT.'

The culprit whose sin had brought this controversy on Sir Walter was not in his vicinity when it was going on—nor cognizant of it until he had committed himself; and on the same 12th of November, being the Poet's last day at Abbotsford for the long vacation, he indited the following rhymes—which savour of his recent overhauling of Swift and Sheridan's doggerel epistles.

'*To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.*

Dear John,—I some time ago wrote to inform his
Fat worship of *jaces*, misprinted for *dormis;*
But that several Southrons assured me the *januam*
Was a twitch to both ears of Ass Priscian's cranium.
You, perhaps, may observe that one Lionel Berguer,
In defence of our blunder appears a stout arguer.
But at length I have settled, I hope, all these clatters,
By a *rowt* in the papers—fine place for such matters.
I have, therefore, to make it for once my command, sir,
That my gudeson shall leave the whole thing in my hand, sir,
And by no means accomplish what James says you threaten,
Some banter in Blackwood to claim your dog-Latin.
I have various reasons of weight, on my word, sir,
For pronouncing a step of this sort were absurd, sir.—
Firstly, erudite sir, 'twas against your advising
I adopted the lines this monstrosity lies in;
For you modestly hinted my English translation
Would become better far such a dignified station.
Second—how, in God's name, would my bacon be saved,
By not having writ what I clearly engraved?
On the contrary, I, on the whole, think it better
To be whipped as the thief, than his lousy resetter.
Thirdly—don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle
Although fifty false metres were flung at my noddle,
For my back is as broad and as hard as Benlomon's,
And I treat as I please both the Greeks and the Romans;
Whereas the said heathens might rather look serious
At a kick on their drum from the scribe of Valerius.
And, fourthly and lastly—it is my good pleasure
To remain the sole source of that murderous measure.
So *stet pro ratione voluntas*—be tractile,
Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
If you do, you'll occasion a breach in our intercourse:
To-morrow will see me in town for the winter-course,
But not at your door, at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir.
Ergo—peace!—on your duty, your squeamishness throttle,
And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a canny third bottle.
A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and dominie Grundys;
A fig for dry thrapples, south, north, east, and west, sir,
Speates and raxes[1] ere five for a famishing guest, sir;

[1] There is an excellent story (but too long for quotation) in the *Memorie of the Somervilles* (vol. i. p. 240) about an old Lord of that family, who, when he wished preparations to be made for high feasting

And as Fatsman[1] and I have some topics for haver, he'll
Be invited, I hope, to meet me and Dame Peveril,
Upon whom, to say nothing of Oury and Anne, you a
Dog shall be deemed if you fasten your *Janua*.

'*P.S.*—*Hoc jocose*—but I am nevertheless in literal earnest. You incur my serious displeasure if you move one inch in this contemptible rumpus. So adieu till to-morrow.—Yours affectionately, W. S.'

In the course of that November several of the huge antique buildings, which gave its peculiar character to the Old Town of Edinburgh, perished by fire; and no one, it may be believed, witnessed this demolition with more regret than Sir Walter. He says to Lord Montagu, on the 18th,—

'My dear Lord—Since I came here I have witnessed a horrible calamity. A fire broke out on Monday night in the High Street, raged all night, and great part of the next day, catching to the steeple of the Tron Church, which being wood was soon in a blaze, and burned like regular fire-works till all was consumed. All this while the flames were spreading down to the Cowgate amongst those closes where the narrowness of the access, and the height of the houses, rendered the approach of engines almost impossible. On Tuesday night, a *second* fire broke out in the Parliament Square, greatly endangering the Courts of Justice, and the Advocates' more than princely Library. By great exertions it was prevented approaching

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at his Castle of Cowthally, used to send on a billet inscribed with this laconic phrase, '*Speates and raxes*,'—i.e. *spits and ranges*. Upon one occasion, Lady Somerville (being newly married, and not yet skilled in her husband's hieroglyphics) read the mandate as *spears and jacks*, and sent forth 200 armed horsemen, whose appearance on the moors greatly alarmed Lord Somerville and his guest, who happened to be no less a person than King James III.—See Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxii. p. 312.

[1] *Fatsman* was one of Mr. James Ballantyne's many *aliases*. Another (to which Constable mostly adhered) was 'Mr. Basketfill'—an allusion to the celebrated printer Baskerville.

this public building; and Sir William Forbes' bank also escaped. But all the other houses in the Parliament Square are totally destroyed; and I can conceive no sight more grand or terrible, than to see these lofty buildings on fire from top to bottom, vomiting out flames like a volcano from every aperture, and finally crashing down one after another into an abyss of fire, which resembled nothing but hell; for there were vaults of wine and spirits which sent up huge jets of flame, whenever they were called into activity by the fall of these massive fragments. Between the corner of the Parliament Square and the South Bridge, all is destroyed excepting some new buildings at the lower extremity; and the devastation has extended down the closes, which I hope will never be rebuilt on their present—I should say their *late* form. The general distress is, of course, dreadful.—Ever yours,

'W. SCOTT.'

CHAPTER LXI

Tales of the Crusaders begun—A Christmas at Abbotsford, in Extracts from the MS. Journal of Captain Basil Hall, R.N.

DEC. 29, 1824—JAN. 10, 1825

DURING the Winter Session of his Court, Sir Walter resumed his usual course of literary exertion, which the supervision of carpenters, painters, and upholsterers had so long interrupted. The Tales of the Crusaders were begun; but I defer, for the present, the history of their progress.

Abbotsford was at last finished, and in all its splendour; and at Christmas, a larger party than the house could ever before have accommodated, were assembled there. Among the guests was one who kept a copious journal during his stay, and has kindly furnished me with a copy of it. I shall, therefore, extract such passages as bear immediately upon Sir Walter Scott himself, who certainly was never subjected to sharper observation than that of his ingenious friend Captain Basil Hall.

EXTRACTS FROM CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL

'ABBOTSFORD, *December* 29, 1824.

'This morning my brother James and I set out from Edinburgh in the Blucher coach at eight o'clock, and although we heard of snow-storms on the hills, we bowled along without the smallest impediment, and with a fine

bright sun and cheerful green fields around us, with only here and there a distant streak of snow in some shady ravine. We arrived in good time—and found several other guests at dinner. . . .

'The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas in a style of extraordinary splendour. The passages, also, and the bedrooms, are lighted in a similar manner. The whole establishment is on the same footing—I mean the attendance and entertainment—all is in good order, and an air of punctuality and method, without any waste or ostentation, pervades everything. Every one seems at his ease; and although I have been in some big houses in my time, and amongst good folks who studied these sort of points not a little, I don't remember to have anywhere met with things better managed in all respects.

'Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, "welled out alway." To write down or two, or one or two dozen, would serve no purpose, as they were all appropriate to the moment, and were told with a tone, gesture, and look, suited exactly to the circumstances, but which it is of course impossible in the least degree to describe.

'ABBOTSFORD, *30th December.*

'This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. He led us through his plantations, which are in all stages of advancement, and entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes, more or less characteristic of the scenes we were passing through. Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of

the Huntly-burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant.

'On reaching an elevated point near a wild mountain lake, from whence we commanded a view of many different parts of his estate, and saw the progress of his improvements, I remarked that it must be interesting to engage in planting. "Interesting!" he cried; "you can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter—he is like a painter laying on his colours—at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath; I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which, I may say almost each of which, have received my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed, the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now: I anticipate what this plantation and that one will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress. Unlike building, or even painting, or indeed any other kind of pursuit, this has no end, and is never interrupted, but goes on from day to day, and from year to year, with a perpetually augmenting interest. Farming I hate; what have I to do with fattening and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle with

farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such disappointments or annoyances in planting trees."

'It is impossible to touch for an instant on any theme, but straightway he has an anecdote to fit it. "What is the name of that bright spot," I said, "on which the sun is shining, just there in the line of Cowdenknowes?"—"That," said he, "is called *Haxel Cleugh.* I was long puzzled," he added, "to find the etymology of this name, and enquired in vain on every hand to discover something suitable. I could learn nothing more than that near the Cleugh there was a spot which tradition said had been a Druidical place of worship. Still this did not help me, and I went on for a long time tormenting myself to no purpose. At length, when I was reading very early one fine summer's morning, I accidentally lighted upon a passage in some German book, which stated that Haxa was the old German term for a Druidess.[1] Here, then, the mystery was solved, and I was so enchanted with the discovery, that I was wild with impatience to tell it to some one; so away I mounted upstairs to my wife's room, where she was lying fast asleep. I was well aware that she neither knew nor cared one jot about the matter; that did not signify—tell it I must immediately to some one; so I roused her up, and although she was very angry at being awakened out of her comfortable doze, I insisted upon bestowing Haxa, and Haxel Cleugh, and all my beautiful discovery of the Druid's temple, upon her notwithstanding. Now, don't you understand this?" said he, turning to me—"Have not you sometimes on board your ship hit upon something which delighted you, so that you could not rest till you had got hold of some one down whose throat you might cram it—some stupid dolt of a lieutenant, or some gaping midshipman, on whom in point of fact it was totally thrown away?—but still you had the satisfaction of imparting it, without which half the pleasure is lost."

'Thus we strolled along, borne as it were on this

[1] *Hexe* is modern German for *witch.*

strange stream of song and story. Nothing came amiss to him; the most trivial and commonplace incident, when turned in his hand, acquired a polish and a clearness of the first water. Over all, too, there was breathed an air of benignity and good-will to all men, which was no less striking than the eloquence and point of his narrations. The manner in which he spoke of his neighbours, and of distant persons of whose conduct he disapproved, was all in the same spirit. He did not cloak their faults—he spoke out manfully in contempt of what was wrong; but this was always accompanied by some kindly observation, some reservation in favour of the good they possessed, some natural and proper allowance. I say natural, because I should be giving a wrong impression of the character of his conversation were I to let it be supposed that these excuses or extenuations were mawkishly uttered, or that he acted a part, and as a matter of rule said something in favour even of those he condemned. . . .

'He is loyal to the backbone, to use a vulgar phrase; but with all this there is nothing servile or merely personal in his loyalty. When the King was coming to Edinburgh, and it was known he was to pass over Waterloo Bridge, a gentleman suggested to him the fitness of concealing or erasing the inscription respecting Prince Leopold[1] on the arch of the bridge, as it was known there was a coolness between the King and his son-in-law. "What!" said he, "shall we insult the King's son-in-law, and through him the King himself, by any allusion to, or notice of, what is so unworthy of all parties? Shall we be ashamed of our own act, and without any diminution of our respect for those to whom the compliment was paid, draw back and eat our words because we have heard of a petty misunderstanding? Shall we undo that, which our respect for the King and his family alone prompted us, right or wrong, to do? No, sir! sooner than that inscription should be erased, or even covered with flags

[1] Prince Leopold had been present at the opening of this bridge —and the inscription records that circumstance.

or flowers, as you propose, or that anything, in short, should be done to show that we were ashamed of our respect for Prince Leopold, or sought to save the King's feelings by a sacrifice of our own dignity, I would with my own hand set the town of Edinburgh on fire, and destroy it!" . . .

'In the evening we had a great feast indeed. Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read Christabel, and upon some of us admitting with shame that we had never even seen it, he offered to read it, and took a chair in the midst of all the party in the library. He read the poem from end to end with a wonderful pathos and variety of expression—in some parts his voice was deep and sonorous, at others loud and animated, but all most carefully appropriate, and very sweetly modulated. In his hands, at all events, Christabel justified Lord Byron's often-quizzed character of it—"a wild and singularly original and beautiful poem."

'Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, or, as it is called, completely *con amore*, the famous poem on Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical—his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly-burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.[1]

'Interspersed with these various readings were hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathetical—some wild and fairylike, and not a few warlike, especially of the old times, and now and then one of Wellington and Waterloo; and sometimes he gave anecdotes of things close to his own doors,—ay, and incidents of this very day, which we had passed unseen, but which were now kindled into interest and importance, as if by the touch of a magician's wand.

'There was also much pleasing singing—many old ballads, and many pretending to be old ballads, were sung

[1] See this ballad in the Border Minstrelsy, vol. iv.

to the harp and pianoforte. The following is so exquisitely pathetic, that I copied it, after I went to my room, from the young ladies' book, and give it a place, though perhaps it is to be found somewhere in print :—

'My love he built me a bonnie bower,' etc. etc.[1]

'ABBOTSFORD, 31*st December* 1824.

'The fashion of keeping up old holidays by bonfires and merriment, is surely decreasing. Or is it that we, the recorders of these things, are getting older, and take consequently less interest in what no longer amuses us, so that we may be deceived in supposing the taste of our juniors to be altered, while in fact it is only our own dispositions and habits that are changed in complexion? It may be so—still I suspect that the progress of education, and the new habits of industry, and the more varied and generous objects which have been opened of late years to all classes, have tended greatly to banish those idle ceremonies and jovialities which I can just recollect in my childhood as being of doubtful pleasure, but which our ancestors describe as being near the summit of their enjoyments. Be this as it may in the eyes of others, I confess, for my part, that your Christmas and New-year's parties seem generally dull. There are several causes for this: The mere circumstance of being brought together for the express purpose of being merry, acts in opposition to the design in view; no one is pleased on compulsion; then it seldom happens that a party is quite well sorted; and a third reason is, that it will scarcely ever happen that a family circle can be drawn together on two successive years, without betraying to the eye of affection some fatal blanks "that were not there before."

'I took notice at supper, as we waited for the moment that was to give birth to a new year, that there was more than one "unquiet drooping of the eye"; and amidst the

[1] See 'The Border Widow's Lament,' in the Minstrelsy, vol. iii. pp. 94-7.

constrained hilarity of the hour I could trace a faltering in some voices, which told distinctly enough to an ear that was watching for it, that however present the smiling cheek and laughing eye might seem to be, the bleeding heart was far away.[1]

'It is true enough that it is to "moralize too deeply" to take things in this way, and to conjure up with an ingenuity of self-annoyance these blighting images. So it is, and so I acted; and as *my* heart was light and unloaded with any care, I exerted myself to carry through the ponderous evening—ponderous only because it was one set apart to be light and gay. I danced reels like a wild man, snapped my fingers, and hallooed with the best of them, flirted with the young ladies at all hazards—and with the elder ones, of which there was a store, I talked and laughed finely. As a suite of rooms was open, various little knots were formed, and nothing would have been nicer had we been left alone, but we must needs be dancing, singing, playing, jesting, or something or other different from that which we might be naturally disposed to be doing. Wherever the Great Unknown went, indeed, there was a sort of halo of fun and intelligence around him; but his plan of letting all things *bide* was not caught up somehow, and we were *shoved* about more than enough.

'Supper was over just at midnight, and as the clock was striking twelve, we all stood up, after drinking a hearty bumper to the old year, and having joined hands cross-wise, each with his right hand seizing his neighbour's left, all joined chorus in an appropriate song by Sir Adam Fergusson, a worthy knight, possessed of infinite drollery. Then followed other toasts of a loyal description, and then a song, a good red-hot Jacobite song *to the King*[2]—a ditty which, a century ago, might have cost the company their

[1] The widow and daughters of the poet's brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, were of the party.

[2] 'Here's to the King, boys,
Ye ken wha I mean, boys,' etc. etc.
See Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*.

heads, or at least their hands—but now it did no more than draw broad smiles of affected apprehension, and that roguish sort of look natural when people are innocently employed in doing what is held to be mischievous, but harms no one.

'Still, still it was ponderous. Not all the humour and miraculous vivacity and readiness of our host could save it —long blank pauses occurred—and then a feeble whisper —but little more, and the roar of a jolly toast subsided into a hollow calm. I dwell upon all this merely to make people consider how useless it is to get up such things nowadays—for if Walter Scott, with all appliances and means to boot—in his noble house—surrounded by his own choice friends—full of health and all he can wish, is unable to exempt a Hogmanay party from the soporific effect proverbially attendant upon manufactured happiness, who else need venture on the experiment! At about one we broke up, and every one seemed rejoiced to be allowed to go about at pleasure: while the horses were putting to, to carry off our numerous company, and shawls were hunting for, people became bright again, and not being called upon to act any part, fell instantly into good-humour; and we had more laughing and true hilarity in the last half-hour than in all the evening before. The Author of Waverley himself seemed to feel the reviving influence of freedom, and cruised about from group to group, firing in a shot occasionally to give spirit to what was going on, and then *hauling off* to engage with some other—to show his stores of old armour—his numerous old carved oak cabinets, filled with the strangest things—adder-stones of magical power—fairies' rings—pearls of price, and amongst the rest a mourning ring of poor Lord Byron's, securely stowed away in one of the inmost drawers!

'On one of those roving expeditions he pushed his head into the circle of which I happened to make one, and seizing upon some casual analogy, said, "that reminds me of a story of a fair, fair lady," etc. All became mute and crowded about him, and he began, in a low, solemn,

and very impressive voice, with a sort of mock earnestness which fixed the attention in a wonderful degree, and gave an air of truth and importance to what he was telling, as if it were some material fact which he had to communicate for our serious consideration. "There was," said he, "a very merry party collected in a town in France, and amongst all the gay lords and ladies there assembled, there was none who caused so great a sensation as a beautiful young lady who danced, played, and sang in the most exquisite style. There were only two unaccountable circumstances belonging to her—one was, that she never went to church, or attended family prayers; the other, that she always wore a slender black velvet band or girdle round her waist. She was often asked about these peculiarities, but she always evaded the interrogatories, and still by her amiable manners and beauty won all hearts. One evening, in a dance, her partner saw an opportunity of pulling the loop of her little black girdle behind; it fell to the ground, and immediately the lady became pale as a sheet—then gradually shrunk and shrunk—till at length nothing was to be seen in her place but a small heap of grey ashes!" . . .

'I forgot to mention that in the course of a conversation about ghosts, fears in the dark, and such matters, Sir Walter mentioned having once arrived at a country inn, when he was told there was no bed for him. "No place to lie down at all?" said he. "No," said the people of the house—"none, except a room in which there is a corpse lying." "Well," said he, "did the person die of any contagious disorder?" "Oh no—not at all," said they. "Well, then," continued he, "let me have the other bed.—So," said Sir Walter, "I laid me down, and never had a better night's sleep in my life."

'ABBOTSFORD, *January* 1, 1825.

'Yesterday being Hogmanay, there was a constant succession of *Guisards—i.e.* boys dressed up in fantastic caps, with their shirts over their jackets, and with wooden

swords in their hands. These players acted a sort of scene before us, of which the hero was one Goloshin, who gets killed in a "battle for love," but is presently brought to life again by a doctor of the party.

'As may be imagined, the taste of our host is to keep up these old ceremonies. Thus, in the morning, yesterday, I observed crowds of boys and girls coming to the back door, where each one got a penny and an oaten-cake. No less than 70 pennies were thus distributed—and very happy the little bodies looked, with their well-stored bags.

'People accustomed to the planting of trees are well aware how grateful the rising generations of the forest are to the hand which thins and prunes them. And it makes one often melancholy to see what a destructive sort of waste and retardation goes on by the neglect of young woods—how much beauty is lost—how much wealth is wantonly thrown away, and what an air of sluttishness is given to scenery which, with a very little trouble, might have adorned and embellished, not to say enriched, many a great estate.

'I never saw this mischievous effect of indolence more conspicuously made manifest than in a part of the grounds here. Sir Walter's property on one side is bounded by a belt of fir trees, say twenty yards across. The "march" runs directly along the centre of this belt, so that one-half of the trees belong to his neighbour, the other to him. The moment he came in possession he set about thinning and pruning the trees, and planting a number of hard-wood shoots under the shelter of the firs. In a very short time the effect was evident: the trees, heretofore choked up, had run into scraggy stems, and were sadly stunted in growth; but having now room to breathe and to take exercise, they have shot up in the course of a few years in a wonderful manner, and have set out branches on all sides, while their trunks have gradually lost the walking-stick or hop-pole aspect which they were forced to assume before, and the beeches and oaks and other recent trees are starting up vigorously under the genial influence of their owner's care. Meanwhile the obstinate, indolent, or

ignorant possessor of the other half of the belt, has done nothing to his woods for many years, and the growth is apparently at a stand in its original ugliness and uselessness. The trees are none of them above half the height of Sir Walter's, and few, if any, of half the diameter. So very remarkable is the difference, that without the most positive assurances I could not believe it possible that it could have been brought about by mere care in so short a period as five years. The trees on the one side are quite without value, either to make fences or to sell as supports to the coal-pits near Berwick, while Sir Walter already reaps a great profit from the mere thinning out of his plantations. To obtain such results, it will be easily understood that much personal attention is necessary, much method and knowledge of the subject. It happens, however, that in this very attention he finds his chief pleasure—he is a most exact and punctual man of business, and has made it his favourite study to acquire a thorough knowledge of the art.

'His excellent taste in planting has produced a very important effect. In laying out his plantations, he was guided, partly by a feeling that it was natural and beautiful to follow the "lie of the ground," as it is called, and partly by an idea that by leading his young wood along hollows and gentle slopes, he would be taking the surest course to give it shelter. But though he had only the prosperity and picturesqueness of the wood in view, he has also, he finds, added to the value of the adjoining fields that remain unplanted. The person who formerly rented one farm came to him and offered to take the unplanted part again, and to pay the same rent for it as he had paid originally for the whole, although one-half of it is now a young forest, and effectually enclosed. On Sir Walter's expressing his surprise at this, the man said that, both for growing corn and for the pasture of sheep, the land was infinitely improved in value by the protection which his rising woods and numerous enclosures afforded.

'This will seem still more remarkable when it is mentioned that, whenever circumstances permitted, his

best land has been selected for planting trees. "I have no patience," he exclaimed, "with those people who consider that a tree is not to be placed except on a soil where nothing else will grow. Why should the noblest of all vegetables be condemned to the worst soil? After all, it is the most productive policy to give trees every advantage, even in a pecuniary point of view, as I have just shown you. The immediate return in cash is not so great indeed as from wheat, but it is eventually as sure, if matters be properly attended to—and this is all over and above one's great and constantly increasing source of enjoyment in the picturesque beauty which rising woods afford."

'ABBOTSFORD, *January* 2, 1825.

'At breakfast to-day we had, as usual, some 150 stories—God knows how they came in, but he is, in the matter of anecdote, what Hudibras was in figures of speech—"his mouth he could not ope—but out there flew a trope"—so with the Great Unknown, his mouth he cannot open without giving out something worth hearing—and all so simply, good-naturedly, and naturally! I quite forget all these stories but one:—"My cousin Watty Scott," said he, "was a midshipman some forty years ago in a ship at Portsmouth; he and two other companions had gone on shore, and had overstayed their leave, spent all their money, and run up an immense bill at a tavern on the Point—the ship made the signal for sailing, but their landlady said, 'No, gentlemen—you shall not escape without paying your reckoning';—and she accompanied her words by appropriate actions, and placed them under the tender keeping of a sufficient party of bailiffs. They felt that they were in a scrape, and petitioned very hard to be released; 'No, no,' said Mrs. Quickly, 'I must be satisfied one way or t'other: you must be well aware, gentlemen, that you will be totally ruined if you don't get on board in time.' They made long faces, and confessed that it was but too true. 'Well,' said she, 'I'll give you one chance—I am so circumstanced here that I cannot carry on my business as a single woman,

and I must contrive somehow to have a husband, or at all events I must be able to produce a marriage certificate; and therefore the only terms on which you shall all three have leave to go on board to-morrow morning is, that one of you consent to marry me. I don't care a d—— which it is, but, by all that's holy, one of you I will have, or else you all three go to jail, and your ship sails without you!' The virago was not to be pacified, and the poor youths, left to themselves, agreed after a time to draw lots, and it happened to fall on my cousin. No time was lost, and off they marched to church, and my poor relative was forthwith spliced. The bride, on returning, gave them a good substantial dinner and several bottles of wine apiece, and having tumbled them into a wherry, sent them off. The ship sailed, and the young men religiously adhered to the oath of secrecy they had taken previous to drawing lots. The bride, I should have said, merely wanted to be married, and was the first to propose an eternal separation. Some months after, at Jamaica, a file of papers reached the midshipmen's berth, and Watty, who was observed to be looking over them carelessly, reading an account of a robbery and murder at Portsmouth, suddenly jumped up, in his ecstasy forgot his obligation of secrecy, and cried out, 'Thanks be to God, my wife is hanged!'"

'Mixed up with all this fun, Sir Walter has much admirable good sense, and makes many valuable reflections, which are apt sometimes to escape notice from the unpretending manner in which they are introduced. Talking of different professions to-day, and of the universal complaint of each one being overstocked, he observed—"Ay, ay, it is the same in all; we wear our teeth out in the hard drudgery of the outset, and at length when we do get bread to eat—we complain that the crust is hard—so that in neither case are we satisfied."

'Taking up a book with a pompous dedication to the King, he read the first paragraph, in which the style was inverted in such a manner as scarcely to be intelligible, but yet was so oddly turned as to excite curiosity. "Now,

this," he said, "is just like a man coming into a room bottom foremost in order to excite attention: he ought to be kicked for his pains."

'Speaking of books and booksellers, he remarked, that, considered generally, an author might be satisfied if he got one-sixth part of the retail price of his book for his share of the profits;—this seems very moderate—but who should have such means of making a right calculation on such a point?

'Some conversation arose about stranger tourists, and I learned that Sir Walter had at length been very reluctantly obliged to put a stop to the inundation of these people, by sending an intimation to the inns at Melrose and Selkirk to stop them, by a message saying it was not convenient to receive company at Abbotsford, unless their visit had been previously announced and accepted. Before this, the house used to be literally stormed: no less than *sixteen* parties, all uninvited, came in one day—and frequently eight or ten forced themselves in; so that it became impossible for the family to have a moment to themselves. The tourists roved about the house, touched and displaced the armour, and I daresay (though this was not admitted) many and many a set carried off some trophy with them.

'Just as breakfast was concluded to-day he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read prayers at eleven, when I expect you all to attend." He did not treat the subject as if ashamed of it, which some do. He did not say, "those who please may come, and any one who likes may stay away," as I have often heard. He read the Church of England service, and did it with singular beauty and impressiveness, varying his voice according to the subject; and as the first lesson was from a very poetical part of Isaiah, he kindled up, and read it with a great deal of animation, without, however, overstepping the solemnity of the occasion.

'We had an amusing instance of his playfulness this evening. Something introduced the subject of lions. "Well," said he, "I think it amusing enough to be a

lion: what think you, Captain Hall?" "Oh," I answered, "I am always too much flattered by it—and nothing gratifies me more than being made to wag my tail and roar in my small way." "That's right," he said, turning to the company; "nothing is more diverting than being handed about in that way, and for my part I enjoy it exceedingly. I was once hunted by a well-known lion-catcher, who I found was also in search of Miss O'Neill, and it so chanced that we met together at Highgate, or in that neighbourhood, and we were carried out to see some grounds, in the course of which both the lion and the lioness found themselves in a place where there was an iron railing all round. 'Now,' said I, 'if you have got a lock there to turn upon us, you have us both for ever, and your fortune is made. You have only to hoist a flag on a pole at the top of the hill, and stick up a few bills, saying that you have just caught those two beautiful animals, and in an hour's time you have half the metropolis to see us at a shilling a head, and we shall roar in grand style—shall we not, Miss O'Neill?'"

'He then laughed much at some lions about town, who disdained being stirred up with a long pole, as every good lion ought to be. "You and I, Captain Hall, know better, and we enjoy ourselves accordingly in our noble-beast capacity;—whereas those poor wretches lose all the good things we get—because, forsooth, they must be loved and admired, and made much of for their mere *human* qualities—while we are content with our pretensions as monsters!"

'ABBOTSFORD, *January* 3.

'There has been an immense flood in the Tweed lately, which overflowed its banks, and did a world of mischief, though not quite so great as that at St. Petersburgh. But what is comical, this rise of the river actually set Abbotsford on fire: at least the offices on the *haugh* below the house, where the water rose three feet perpendicular above the floor; and happening to encounter a pile of unslaked lime in the corner of a cow-house, presently set it in a blaze! There was no want of water, you may be sure—

"too much of water, poor Ophelia"—and no great damage was done. This flood raised the water considerably more than a foot—exactly three inches higher than that of 1812, the highest ever known up to that date.

'A neighbouring laird and his son joined our party yesterday, Mr. Henderson of Eildon Hall, and the proprietor of the well-known hills of that name. His history may amuse you. He was, long ago, clerk of the Cocket at Leith, an office worth £50 a year, and this was his whole substance. It chanced that Mr. Ramsay, the banker, was in want of a clerk, and said to a friend, "Do you know any one who writes a good hand, is honest and steady, and who never opens his mouth from one year's end to the other?" "I know your man exactly," said the other; and Mr. H. was accordingly made clerk under Mr. Ramsay, with whom he kept up the necessary communication by means of a sort of telegraph, as it is alleged, as Mr. R. had a great dislike to speech. In process of time our hero insinuated himself so completely into the good graces of his patron, that he got a small share in the bank, then a larger, and so on. It happened about this time that the man who had taken Craigleith quarry failed for want of capital; and our friend, the silent clerk of the Cocket, who had the bank under his lee, bought up the contract, and cleared ten thousand a year for nine or ten years by this one job. So that what with the bank, and sundry other speculations, which all turned out well, he amassed great wealth, and resolved to turn country gentleman.

'One day in company he was making enquiries about land, and a gentleman opposite was so eloquent in praise of Eildon Hall, then in the market, that he was seized with a desire to be the purchaser. "What is the price?" asked he. "Why," said the other, "I daresay you may get it for forty thousand pounds." "Indeed!" said our quarryman, "I will give that with pleasure—and I authorise you to make the offer."

'Now, the amusing thing about this transaction is, that the estate in question had been sometime advertised for sale for thirty-seven thousand pounds only; thus our worthy

friend of the telegraph gave three thousand more for the property than was asked, to the great delight and astonishment of Messrs. Todd and Romanes, the agents for the sale. A fact, by the way, which goes far to support the Lord Chancellor's estimate of a banker's intellects.

'With all this, our taciturn friend makes "a very decent lord," is well esteemed in the neighbourhood, and, as he has the discretion now to take good advice, he is likely to do well.

'Sir Adam Fergusson, who is the most humorous man alive, and delights in showing up his neighbour, mentioned to him the other day that the Eildon estate was sadly in want of lime. "Eh!" said the laird, "I am much obliged to you for that hint—I am just ruined for want o' hints!"

'At this moment there is a project for making a railway from Berwick to Kelso, as all the world knows; but the Great Unknown and several other gentlemen are anxious to tail on a branch from Melrose to meet the great one; and as Mr. H., with his long purse and his willingness to receive hints, is no bad card in the game, he has been brought up to Abbotsford for a week: his taciturnity has long ago fled, and he is now one of the most loquacious Borderers going. Torwoodlee, too, and his son the Skipper, came to breakfast to-day, in order that the whole party might have a consultation before going to the railroad meeting at Melrose. I should suspect that when the Author of Waverley sets his shoulders to any wheel, it must be in a devilish deep slough if it be not lifted out.

'As my brother James was obliged to return to Edinburgh, and I thought that I had stayed long enough, we set out from Abbotsford after luncheon, very reluctantly, for the party had grown upon our esteem very much, and had lately been augmented by the arrival from England of Mr. Lockhart, whom I wished to get acquainted with, and of Captain Scott, the poet's eldest son. The family urged me very much to stay, and I could only get away by making a promise to return for their little dance on

Friday evening; so that it is not impossible this journal may have some additions made to it in the same strain.'

'ABBOTSFORD, *7th January* 1825.

'To-day my sister Fanny and I came here. In the evening there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit.

'We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood—at least half-a-dozen Fergussons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head—Lady Fergusson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore—etc. etc. etc. . . .

'The evening passed very merrily, with much spirited dancing; and the supper was extremely cheerful, and quite superior to that of Hogmanay.'

'ABBOTSFORD, *8th January*.

'It is wonderful how many people a house can be made to hold upon occasions such as this; and when, in the course of the morning, the neighbours came to stream off to their respective homes, one stared, like the man in the Arabian Nights who uncorked the genie, thinking how the deuce they ever got in. There were a few who stayed a while to saunter about the dressed grounds, under the guidance of Sir Walter; but by one or two o'clock my sister and I found ourselves the only guests left, and on the Great Unknown proposing a walk to a point in his plantations called Turn-again, we gladly accepted his offer and set out.

'I have never seen him in better spirits, and we accompanied him for several hours with great delight. I observed on this occasion the tone of his innumerable anecdotes was somewhat different from what it had been when James and I and some other gentlemen formed his companions. There was then an occasional roughness in the point and matter of the stories; but no trace of this to-day. He was no less humorous, however, and varied

than before;—always appropriate, too—in harmony with the occasion, as it were—never lugging in stories by the head and shoulders. It is very difficult, I may say impossible, to give a correct conception of this by mere description. So much consists in the manner and the actual tone and wording of what is said; so much, also, which cannot be imparted, in the surrounding circumstances—the state of the weather—the look of the country—the sound of the wind in the trees close at hand—the view of the distant hills:—all these and a thousand other things produce an effect on the minds of those present which suits them for the reception of the conversation at the moment, and prevents any transfer of the sentiments produced thereby, to any one differently circumstanced.

'On reaching the brow of the hill on the eastern side of one of his plantations, we came in sight of Melrose Abbey, on which there was a partial gleam of sunshine lighting up an angle of the ruins. Straightway we had an anecdote of Tom Purdie, his gamekeeper and *factotum*. Tom has been many years with Sir Walter, and being constantly in such company, has insensibly picked up some of the taste and feeling of a higher order. "When I came here first," said Tom to the factor's wife, "I was little better than a beast, and knew nae mair than a cow what was pretty and what was ugly. I was cuif enough to think that the bonniest thing in a country-side was a corn-field enclosed in four stane dykes; but now I ken the difference. Look this way, Mrs. Laidlaw, and I'll show you what the gentlefolks likes. See ye there now the sun glinting on Melrose Abbey? It's no aw bright, nor it's no aw shadows neither, but just a bit screed o' light—and a bit daud o' dark yonder like, and that's what they ca' picturesque; and, indeed, it maun be confessed it is unco bonnie to look at!"

'Sir Walter wished to have a road made through a straight belt of trees which had been planted before he purchased the property, but being obliged to return to Edinburgh, he entrusted it to Tom Purdie, his "right-hand man." "Tom," said he, "you must not make this

walk straight—neither must it be crooked." "Deil, Sir! than what maun it be like?" "Why," said his master, "don't you remember when you were a shepherd, Tom, the way in which you dandered hame of an even? You never walked straight to your house, nor did you go much about; now make me just such a walk as you used to take yourself." Accordingly "*Tom's walk*" is a standing proof of the skill and taste of the *ci-devant* shepherd, as well as of the happy power which his master possesses, in trifles as well as in great affairs, of imparting his ideas to those he wishes to influence. . . .

'In the course of our walk he entertained us much by an account of the origin of the beautiful song of "Auld Robin Gray." "It was written," he said, "by Lady Anne Lindsay, now Lady Anne Barnard.[1] She

[1] Lady Anne Barnard died in 1825, and in the same year Sir Walter Scott edited, for the Bannatyne Club, a tract containing a corrected version of the original ballad, and two continuations by the authoress. Part of the preface, which consists almost entirely of a letter from her to the editor, is as follows:—'*Robin Gray*, so called from its being the name of *the old herd* at Balcarras, was born soon after the close of the year 1771. My sister Margaret had married and accompanied her husband to London; I was melancholy, and endeavoured to amuse myself by attempting a few poetical trifles. There was an ancient Scotch melody, of which I was passionately fond; —— ——, who lived before your day, used to sing it to us at Balcarras. She did not object to its having improper words, though I did. I longed to sing old Sophy's air to different words, and give to its plaintive tones some little history of virtuous distress in humble life, such as might suit it. While attempting to effect this in my closet, I called to my little sister, now Lady Hardwicke, who was the only person near me, "I have been writing a ballad, my dear; I am oppressing my heroine with many misfortunes. I have already sent her Jamie to sea, and broken her father's arm, and made her mother fall sick, and given her Auld Robin Gray for her lover; but I wish to load her with a fifth sorrow within the four lines, poor thing! Help me to one."—"Steal the cow, sister Anne," said the little Elizabeth. The cow was immediately *lifted* by me, and the song completed. At our fireside, and amongst our neighbours, "Auld Robin Gray" was always called for. I was pleased in secret with the approbation it met with; but such was my *dreaa* of being suspected of writing *anything*, perceiving the shyness it created in those who could write *nothing*, that I carefully kept my own secret. * * * * Meantime, little as this matter

happened to be at a house where she met Miss Suff Johnstone, a well-known person, who played the air, and accompanied it by words of no great delicacy, whatever their antiquity might be; and Lady Anne lamenting that no better words should belong to such a melody, immediately set to work and composed this very pathetic story. Truth, I am sorry to say, obliges me to add that it was a fiction. Robin Gray was her father's gardener, and the idea of the young lover going to sea, which would have been quite out of character here amongst the shepherds, was natural enough where she was then residing, on the coast of Fife. It was long unknown," he added, "who the author was; and indeed there was a clergyman on the coast whose conscience was so large that he took the burden of this matter upon himself, and pleaded guilty to the authorship. About two years ago I wrote to Lady Anne to know the truth—and she wrote back to say she was certainly the author, but wondered how I could have guessed it, as there was no person alive

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seems to have been worthy of a dispute, it afterwards became a party question between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. "Robin Gray" was either a very very ancient ballad, composed perhaps by David Rizzio, and a great curiosity—or a very very modern matter, and no curiosity at all. I was persecuted to avow whether I had written it or not,—where I had got it. Old Sophy kept my counsel, and I kept my own, in spite of the gratification of seeing a reward of twenty guineas offered in the newspapers to the person who should ascertain the point past a doubt, and the still more flattering circumstance of a visit from Mr. Jerningham, secretary to the Antiquarian Society, who endeavoured to entrap the truth from me in a manner I took amiss. Had he asked me the question obligingly, I should have told him the fact distinctly and confidentially. The annoyance, however, of this important ambassador from the antiquaries, was amply repaid to me by the noble exhibition of the "Ballat of Auld Robin Gray's Courtship," as performed by dancing-dogs under my window. It proved its popularity from the highest to the lowest, and gave me pleasure while I hugged myself in my obscurity.'

The two versions of the second part of the ballad, written many years after the first part, are very inferior to it. In them, Auld Robin falls sick,—confesses that he himself stole the cow in order to force Jenny to marry him,—leaves to Jamie all his possessions,—dies,—and the young couple of course are united.—*Note by the Rev. Alexander Dyce*, 1839.

to whom she had told it. When I mentioned having heard it long ago from a common friend who was dead, she then recollected me, and wrote one of the kindest letters I ever received, saying she had till now not the smallest idea that I was the little *lame boy* she had known so many years before."

'I give this anecdote partly from its own interest, and partly for the sake of introducing the unconcerned allusion to his own lameness—which I have heard him mention repeatedly, in the same sort of way, without seemingly caring about it. Once speaking of the old city wall of Edinburgh (which, by the way, he says was built during the panic caused by the disastrous battle of Flodden Field)—he said it used to be a great *ploy* in his youth to climb the said wall. "I used often to do it," he observed, "notwithstanding my bad foot, which made it no very easy job."

'On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written "The *Rod* to Selkirk." We made some remark about Tom's orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. "I cannot say," he remarked, "that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless," he continued, "I have no scruple in saying that what I did, deserved the good people's acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to

put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient—and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done, in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies —but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant."[1]

'He told us of the different periods at which he had planted his grounds. "I bought this property bit by bit," he said, "as accident threw the means of purchase into my hands: I could not lay it all out in a consistent plan, for when I first came here I merely bought a few acres and built a cottage, as a kind of occasional retreat from the bustle of Edinburgh. By degrees I got another and another farm, till all you now see came to me. If things go on improving at the rate they do in the matter of travelling, I daresay I shall be able to live here all the year round, and come out every day from the Court. At present I pass about seven months of the year at

[1] 'Talking one day upon this subject, he told me that he had much more pleasure when the children from Darnick and Melrose would come up to him with a pocketful of nuts, pulled from his own trees, than to see them scampering off the instant they got a peep of him. He had the satisfaction to find, too, that instead of having his woods destroyed, like man-trap, spring-gun-men, and prosecutors in general, the trespassers seemed as careful as if they were their own. "And as to the nuts," he added, "I can buy as many for half-a-crown as I could gather any year from the whole glen, however well watched and protected."'—*Note by Mr. Andrew Shortrede*, 1839.

Abbotsford, but if the projected railway is established, and we have steam-coaches upon it running at twenty miles an hour, it will be merely good exercise to go in to breakfast and come back to dinner."

'In a hilly country such as this, one is more dependent upon the taste of one's neighbours than where the surface is flat, for the inequalities bring into view many distant points which one must constantly be wishing to see turned to advantage. Thus it is of consequence to be on such friendly terms with the neighbourhood, especially the proprietors on the opposite side of the river, that they may take one's comfort and pleasure into consideration when they come to plant, or otherwise to embellish their ground. Sir Walter pointed out several different plantations which had been made expressly with a view to the improvement of the prospect from Abbotsford. The owner of one of these estates came over to him one day to point out the line which he had traced with a plough, as the limit of a new plantation, and asked Sir Walter how he liked it, or if he wished any alteration to be made. The Author of Waverley thanked him for his attention, and the two gentlemen climbed the hill above Abbotsford to take the matter into consideration. It was soon seen that, without extending the projected plantation, or diminishing its beauty with reference to the estate on which it was made, a new line might be drawn which would double its apparent magnitude, and greatly enhance the beauty of its form as seen from Abbotsford. The gentleman was delighted to have an opportunity of obliging the Great well-known Unknown, and cantered back to change the line. The young trees are already giving sufficient evidence of the good taste of the proposer of the change, and, it may be said also, of his good sense and his good-nature, for unless he possessed both in an eminent degree, all his gigantic talents would be insufficient to bring round about him the ready hearts and hands of all within his reach. Scott of Gala, for instance, has out of pure kindness planted, for a space of several miles, the whole of the opposite bank of the

Tweed, and with great pains improved all the lines of his father's planting, solely to please his neighbour, and without any benefit to his own place. His worthy friend, also, of Eildon Hall, he told us to-day, had kindly undertaken, in the same spirit, to plant the base of these two beautiful hills, which, without diminishing their grandeur, will greatly add to their picturesque effect, and, in fact, increase the bold magnificence of their summits.

'"I make not a rule to be on intimate terms," he told us, "with all my neighbours—that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good—some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality; but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, if kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged, and good-will begot if it did not exist before—strengthened if it did exist."——

'"There, see," he continued, 'that farm there, at the foot of the hill, is occupied by a respectable enough tenant of mine; I told him I had a great desire for him to try the effect of lime on his land. He said he doubted its success, and could not venture to risk so much money as it would cost. "Well," said I, "fair enough; but as I wish to have the experiment tried, you shall have the lime for the mere carting; you may send to the place where it is to be bought, and at the term-day you shall strike off the whole value of the lime from the rent due to me." When the day came, my friend the farmer came with his whole rent, which he laid down on the table before me without deduction. "How's this, my man? you are to deduct for the lime, you know." "Why, Sir Walter," replied he, "my conscience will not let me impose on you so far—the lime you recommended me to try, and which

but for your suggestion I never would have tried, has produced more than would have purchased the lime half-a-dozen times over, and I cannot think of making a deduction."

'In this way, by a constant quiet interchange of good offices, he extends his great influence amongst all classes, high and low; and while in the morning, at breakfast-time, he gets a letter from the Duke of Wellington, along with some rare Spanish manuscripts taken at Vittoria[1]—at mid-day he is gossiping with a farmer's wife, or pruning his young trees cheek by jowl with Tam Purdie—at dinner he is keeping the table merry, over his admirable good cheer, with ten hundred good stories, or discussing railroads, blackfaced sheep, and other improvements, with Torwoodlee—in the evening he is setting the young folks to dance, or reading some fine old ballad from Percy's Reliques, or some black-letter tome of Border lore, or giving snatches of beautiful songs, or relating anecdotes of chivalry—and ever and anon coming down to modern home life with some good honest practical remark which sinks irresistibly into the minds of his audience,—and all with such ease and unaffected simplicity as never, perhaps, was seen before in any man so gifted—so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination, of the whole world! Who can doubt that, after such a day as I have glanced at, his slumbers must be peaceful, and that remorse is a stranger to his bosom, and that all his renown, all his wealth, and the love of "such troops of friends," are trebly gratifying to him, and substantial, from their being purchased at no cost but that of truth and nature.

'Alas for poor Lord Byron, of whom he told us an anecdote to-day, by which it appeared that his immense fame as an author was altogether insufficient to harden him against the darts of calumny or malevolence levelled at his private life. He quoted, with the bitterest despair, to Scott the strong expression of Shakspeare—

[1] About this time the Duke sent Scott some curious documents about the proposed duel between Charles V. and Francis I.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us;[1]

and added, "I would to God that I could have your peace of mind, Mr. Scott; I would give all I have, all my fame, everything, to be able to speak on this subject" (that of domestic happiness) "as you do!"

'Sir Walter describes Lord Byron as being a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion. Instead of being warned or checked by public opposition, it roused him to go on in a worse strain, as if he said—"Ay, you don't like it—well, you shall have something worse for your pains." Thus his Lordship, poor fellow, by taking the wrong view, went on from bad to worse, and at every struggle with the public sunk deeper and deeper in their esteem, while he himself became more and more sensitive about their disapprobation. "Many, many a pleasant hour I have spent with him," Sir Walter added, "and I never met a man with nobler feelings, or one who, had he not unfortunately taken the wrong course, might have done more to make himself beloved and respected. A man of eminence in any line, and perhaps a man of great literary eminence especially, is exposed to a thousand eyes which men, not so celebrated, are safe from—and in consequence, right conduct is much more essential to his happiness than to those who are less watched; and I may add, that only by such conduct can the permanence of his real influence over any class be secured. I could not persuade Byron to see it in this light—the more's the pity, for he has had no justice done him."

'Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. "I dislike all such interference," he said,—"all your domiciliary, kind, impertinent visits—they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good: let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman

[1] King Lear, Act V. Scene 3.

coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beef-steak into a French kickshaw? And who is there so miserably put to his ways and means that will endure to have another coming to teach him how to economize and keep his accounts? Let the poor alone in their domestic habits, I pray you; protect them and treat them kindly, of course, and trust them; but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be—but for any sake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care," he added, "not to give them anything gratis; except when they are under the gripe of immediate *misery*—what *they* think misery—consider it as a sin to do anything that can tend to make them lose the precious feeling of independence. For my part, I very very rarely give anything away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter), than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners, goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick; and this is my notion of charity."

'I shall have given a false impression of this great man's character to those who do not know him, if I have left an impression that he is all goodness and forbearance—that there is no acid in his character; for I have heard him several times as sharp as need be when there was occasion. To-day, for instance, when a recent trial, in which a beautiful actress was concerned, happened to be brought into discussion, he gave his opinion of all the parties with great force and spirit; and when the lady's father's name was mentioned as having connived at his daughter's disgrace, he exclaimed—"Well, I do not know what I would not give to have one good kick at that infernal rascal—I would give it to him," said he, drawing his chair back a foot from the table, "I would give it to

him in such a style as should send the vagabond out of that window as far as the Tweed. Only, God forgive me," added he, smiling at his own unwonted impetuosity, and drawing his chair forward quietly to the table, "only it would be too good a death for the villain; and besides," said he, his good-humoured manner returning as he spoke, "it would be a sad pollution to our bonny Tweed to have the drowning of such a thoroughbred miscreant as could sell his daughter's honour!"

'It is interesting to see how all ranks agree to respect our hero, and to treat him with respect at once, and with kindness and familiarity. On high days and holidays, a large blue ensign, such as is worn by ships of war, is displayed at a flag-staff, rising from a round tower built for the purpose at one angle of his garden. The history of this flag is as follows:—

'The "Old Shipping Smack Company" of Leith some time ago launched one of the finest vessels they had ever sailed, and called her "The Walter Scott," in honour of their countryman. In return for this compliment he made the Captain a present of a set of flags; which flags you may be sure the noble commander was not shy of displaying to all the world. Now it so happens that there is a strict order forbidding all vessels, except King's ships, to hoist any other flag than a red ensign, so that when our gallant smack-skipper chanced to fall in with one of his Majesty's cruisers, he was ordered peremptorily to pull down his blue colours. This was so sore a humiliation, that he refused to obey, and conceiving that he could outsail the frigate, crowded all sail, and tried to make off with his ensign still flying at his masthead. The ship-of-war, however, was not to be so satisfied, and hinted as much by dropping a cannon-shot across his forefoot. Down came the blue ensign, which was accordingly made prize of, and transmitted forthwith to the Lords of the Admiralty, as is usual in such cases of contumely. Their Lordships, in merry mood, and perhaps even in the plentitude of their power feeling the respect which was

due to genius, sent the flag to Abbotsford, and wrote an official letter to Sir Walter, stating the case, and requesting him to have the goodness to give orders to his cruisers in future not to hoist colours appropriated exclusively to the ships of his Majesty. The transaction was creditable to all parties, and he, instead of taking offence,[1] as a blockhead in his place would have done, immediately sent for his masons, and built him a tower on which to erect his flag—and the first occasion on which it was displayed was the late return of his eldest son from England. . . .

'I have caught the fever of story-telling from contact with this Prince of all Story-tellers! During the riots for the immaculate Queen lately deceased, a report went abroad, it seems, that Abbotsford had been attacked by a mob, its windows broken, and the interior ransacked. "Ay, ay," said one of the neighbouring country people to whom the story was told, "so there was a great slaughter of people?"—"Na, na," said his informant, "there was naebody killed."—"Weel, then," said the other, "depend upon it, it's aw a lee—if Abbotsford is taken by storm, and the Shirra in it, ye'll hae afterwards to tak account o' the killed and wounded, I'se warrant ye!"'

'Abbotsford, *January* 9.

'We saw nothing of the chief till luncheon-time, between one and two, and then only for a few minutes. He had gone out to breakfast, and on his return seemed busy with writing. At dinner he was in great force, and pleasant it was to observe the difference which his powers of conversation undergo by the change from a large to a small party. On Friday, when we sat down twenty to dinner, it cost him an effort apparently to keep the ball up at table; but next day, when the company was reduced to his own family, with only two strangers (Fanny and I),

[1] I do not understand how any man could have taken offence under these circumstances. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Melville, and the Secretary, Mr. Croker, were both intimate friends of Sir Walter's—and all that passed was of course matter of pleasantry.

he appeared delighted to be at home, and expanded with surprising animation, and poured forth his stores of knowledge and fun on all hands. I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family than he is. The best proof of this is the ease and confidence with which they all treat him, amounting quite to familiarity. Even the youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him, and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence—his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it—he either joins in what is going on, or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up—no skill can put people at their ease, where the disposition does not sincerely co-operate.

'Very probably he has so correct a knowledge of human character in all its varieties, that he may assist by art in giving effect to this naturally kind bent of his disposition, and this he may do without ceasing to be perfectly natural. For instance, he never sits at any particular place at table—but takes his chance, and never goes, as a matter of course, to the top or to the bottom.[1] Perhaps this and other similar things are accidental, and done without reflection; but at all events, whether designed or not, their effect is to put every one as much at his ease as if a being of a superior order were not present.

'I know no one who takes more delight in the stories of others than he does, or who seems less desirous of occupying the ears of the company. It is true that no one topic can be touched upon, but straightway there flows out a current of appropriate story—and let the anecdote which any one else tells be ever so humorous, its only effect is to elicit from him another, or rather a dozen others, still more in point. Yet, as I am trying to describe this singular man to others who have not seen him, I should be leaving a wrong impression of his style in this respect, were I to omit mentioning that there is nothing in the least like

[1] This seems refining. Sir Walter, like any other gentleman of his standing, might be expected to devolve the labour of carving on one of his sons.

triumph on these occasions, or any apparent wish to excel the last speaker—the new key is struck, as it were, and instantly the instrument discourses most eloquent music—but the thing is done as if he could not help it; and how often is his story suggested by the obvious desire to get the man that has been speaking out of a scrape, either with some of the hearers, or perhaps with his own conscience. "Are you a sportsman?" he asked me to-day. I said I was not—that I had begun too late in life, and that I did not find shooting in particular at all amusing. "Well, neither do I," he observed; "time has been when I did shoot a good deal, but somehow I never very much liked it. I was never quite at ease when I had knocked down my blackcock, and going to pick him up, he cast back his dying eye with a look of reproach. I don't affect to be more squeamish than my neighbours,—but I am not ashamed to say, that no practice ever reconciled me fully to the cruelty of the affair. At all events, now that I can do as I like without fear of ridicule, I take more pleasure in seeing the birds fly past me unharmed. I don't carry this nicety, however, beyond my own person—as Walter there will take good occasion to testify to-morrow."

'Apparently fearing that he had become a little too sentimental, he speedily diverted our thoughts by telling us of a friend of his, Mr. Hastings Sands, who went out to shoot for the first time, and after firing away for a whole morning without any success, at length brought down a bird close to the house, and ran up to catch his pheasant, as he supposed—but which, to his horror, he found was a pet parrot, belonging to one of the young ladies. It was flapping its painted plumage, now all dripping with blood—and ejaculating quickly, Pretty Poll! pretty Poll! as it expired at the feet of the luckless sportsman—who, between shame and regret, swore that, as it was his first experiment in shooting, it should be his last; and on the spot broke his gun all to pieces, and could never afterwards bear to hear a shot fired.

'But I am forgetting what I hinted at as a very characteristic turn of his good-nature. I had mentioned

among other reasons why I was not very fond of shooting, that when I missed I was mortified at my want of skill, and that when I saw the bird lying dead at my feet it recalled to my mind a boyish piece of cruelty which I had been guilty of some five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, the recollection of which has been a source of frequent and bitter remorse. It is almost too bad to relate—suffice it that the nest was robbed, the young ones drowned before the mother's eyes, and then she was killed. "You take it too deeply now," he said; "and yet an early circumstance of that kind, properly reflected upon, is calculated to have the best effect on our character throughout life. I too," he continued, "have my story of boyish cruelty, which has often given me the bitterest remorse in my after-life; but which I think has carried with it its useful lesson in practice. I saw a dog coming towards me, when I was a boy about the age you describe yourself to have been when you murdered the ox-eye family. What devil tempted me I know not, but I took up a large stone, threw it, and hit the dog. Nevertheless, it had still strength to crawl up to me, and lick my feet kindly, though its leg was broken—it was a poor bitch big with pup."

'From parrots we got to *corbies*, or ravens, and he told us with infinite humour a story of a certain tame bird of this description, whose constant delight was to do mischief, and to plague all mankind and beastkind. "A stranger," he said, "called one day with a very surly dog, whose habit it was to snarl and bite at every animal save man; and he was consequently the terror and hatred of his own fraternity, and of the whole race of cats, sheep, poultry, and so on. 'Maître Corbeau' seemed to discover the character of the stranger, and from the moment of his arrival determined to play him a trick. I watched him all the while, as I saw clearly that he had a *month's mind* for some mischief. He first hopped up familiarly to Cato, as if to say, 'How d'ye do?' Cato snapped and growled like a bear. Corbie retired with a flutter, saying, 'God bless me, what's the matter? I had no idea, my good sir, that I was offending you—I scarcely saw you, I was looking for a worm.' By

and by he made another studied sort of approach—and when Cato growled he drew off, with an air as if he said, 'What the devil is the matter with *you?*—I'm not meddling with you—let *me* alone.' Presently the dog became less and less suspicious of Mr. Corbie, and composed himself on the sunny gravel-walk in a fine sleep. Corbie watched his moment, and hopped and hopped quietly till close up, and then leaping on Cato's back, flapped his wings violently, gave one or two severe dabs with his bill, and then flew up to the edge of the cornice over the gateway, and laughed and screamed with joy at the impotent fury of the dog: a human being could not have laughed more naturally—and no man that ever existed could have enjoyed a mischievous joke more completely than our friend Corbie." . . .

'10*th January* 1825.

'The party at Abbotsford breaks up this morning, to the sorrow, I believe, of every member of it. The loadstar of our attraction, accompanied by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, and her family, set off for Lord Dalhousie's —and all the others, except Lady Scott and her daughter, who are to follow in a day or two, are streaming off in different directions. Sir Walter seems as unwilling to leave the country, and return to the bustle of the city, as any schoolboy could have been to go back to his lessons after the holidays. No man perhaps enjoys the country more than he does, and he is said to return to it always with the liveliest relish. It may be asked, if this be so, why he does not give up the town altogether? He might do so, and keep his Sheriffship; but his Clerkship is a thing of more consequence, and that he must lose; and what is far more important still, his constant transactions with the booksellers could never be carried on with convenience, were he permanently settled at a distance from them and their marts. His great purchases of land, his extensive plantations, the crowd of company which he entertains, and the splendid house he has just completed, are all severe pulls on his income—an income, it must be

recollected, which is produced not from any fund, but by dint of labour, and from time to time. He is too prudent and sagacious a man not to live within his means; but as yet he cannot have laid by much, and he will have to write a good deal more before he can safely live where he pleases, and as he pleases.

'It becomes a curious question to know when it is that he actually writes these wonderful works which have fixed the attention of the world. Those who live with him, and see him always the idlest man of the company, are at a loss to discover when it is that he finds the means to compose his books. My attention was of course directed this way, and I confess I see no great difficulty about the matter. Even in the country here, where he comes professedly to be idle, I took notice that we never saw him till near ten o'clock in the morning, and, besides this, there were always some odd hours in the day in which he was not to be seen.

'We are apt to wonder at the prodigious quantity which he writes, and to imagine the labour must be commensurate. But, in point of fact, the quantity of mere writing is not very great. It certainly is immense if the quality be taken into view; but if the mere amount of handwriting be considered, it is by no means large. Any clerk in an office would transcribe one of the Waverley Novels, from beginning to end, in a week or ten days—say a fortnight. It is well known, or at least generally, and I have reason to believe truly admitted, that Sir Walter composes his works just as fast as he can write—that the manual labour is all that it costs him, for his thoughts flow spontaneously. He never corrects the press, or if he does so at all, it is very slightly—and in general his works come before the public just as they are written. Now, such being the case, I really have no difficulty in supposing that a couple of hours every day before breakfast may be quite sufficient for all the MS. of Waverley Novels produced in the busiest year since the commencement of the series.

'Since writing the above I have taken the trouble to

make a computation, which I think fair to give, whichever way it may be thought to make in the argument.

'In each page of Kenilworth there are, upon an average, 864 letters: in each page of this Journal 777 letters. Now I find that in ten days I have written 120 pages, which would make about 108 pages of Kenilworth; and as there are 320 pages in a volume, it would, at my rate of writing this Journal, cost about 29½ days for each volume, or say three months for the composition of the whole of that work. No mortal in Abbotsford-house ever learned that I kept a Journal. I was in company all day and all the evening till a late hour—apparently the least occupied of the party; and, I will venture to say, not absent from the drawing-room one quarter of the time that the Unknown was. I was always down to breakfast before any one else, and often three-quarters of an hour before the Author of Kenilworth—always among the very last to go to bed—in short, I would have set the acutest observer at defiance to have discovered when I wrote this Journal—and yet it is written, honestly and fairly, day by day. I don't say it has cost me much labour; but it is surely not too much to suppose that its composition has cost me, an unpractised writer, as much study as Kenilworth has cost the glorious Unknown. I have not had the motive of £5500 to spur me on for my set of volumes; but if I had had such a bribe, in addition to the feelings of good-will for those at home, for whose sole perusal I write this; and if I had had in view, over and above, the literary glory of contributing to the happiness of two-thirds of the globe, do you think I would not have written ten times as much, and yet no one should have been able to discover when it was that I had put pen to paper?

'All this assumes Sir Walter Scott to be *the man*. If at a distance there still exist any doubt on the question, there seems to be no longer any in Edinburgh. The whole tenor of Sir Walter's behaviour on the occasion shows him to be the writer; and the single argument of a man of his candour and literary taste never speaking of,

or praising works such as these, would alone be sufficient. It would be totally irreconcilable with every part of his character to suppose that he would for an instant take the credit of another's work—and this *silence* is equivalent to the claim.

'It may then be settled that he is certainly the author—but some may ask, why then does he affect any mystery about it? This is easily answered—it saves him completely from a world of flattery and trouble, which he sincerely detests. He never reads the criticisms on his books: this I know from the most unquestionable authority. "Praise," he says, "gives him no pleasure—and censure annoys him." He is fully satisfied to accept the intense avidity with which his novels are read—the enormous and continued sale of his works, as a sufficient commendation of them; and I can perfectly understand how the complete exemption from all idle flattery addressed to himself personally is a great blessing. Be it remembered, that this favour would be bummed into his ears by every stupid wretch whom he met with, as well as by the polite and learned—he would be literally worried to death by praise, since not a blockhead would ever let him pass. As it is, he enjoys all the reputation he would have if his name were on the title-page, perhaps more; he enjoys all the profit—and he escapes all worry about the matter. There is, no doubt, some little bookselling trick in it too; but this is fair enough: his works are perhaps more talked of, and consequently more sold, than if the author were avowed—but the real cause of the mystery undoubtedly is his love of quiet, which he can thus indulge without the loss of one grain of literary fame or advantage of any description.

'To conclude—Sir Walter Scott really seems as great as a man as he is as an author; for he is altogether untouched by the applause of the whole civilized world. He is still as simple in his manners, as modest, unassuming, kind, and considerate, in his behaviour to all persons, as he was when the world were unaware of his enormous powers. If any man can be said to have a right to be

presumptuous in consequence of possessing acknowledged talents far above those of his company, he is this man. But what sagacity and intimate knowledge of human nature does it not display, when a man thus gifted, and thus entitled as it were to assume a higher level, undazzled by such unanimous praise, has steadiness of head enough not to be made giddy, and clearness enough of moral vision to discover, that so far from lessening the admiration which it is admitted he might claim if he pleased, he augments it infinitely by seeming to waive that right altogether! How wisely he acts by mixing familiarly with all men, drawing them in crowds around him, placing them at their ease within a near view of his excellence, and taking his chance of being more correctly seen, more thoroughly known, and having his merits more heartily acknowledged, than if, with a hundred times even his abilities, he were to trumpet them forth to the world, and to frighten off spectators to a distance by the brazen sound!

'It is, no doubt, in a great measure, to this facility of access, and engaging manner, that his immense popularity is due; but I should hold it very unfair to suppose that he proceeds upon any such calculation. It is far more reasonable to conclude that Providence, in giving him such astonishing powers of pleasing others, should also have gifted him with a heart to understand and value the delight of being beloved as well as wondered at and admired; and we may suppose that he now enjoys a higher pleasure from seeing the happiness which he has given birth to, both abroad in the world, and at home by his own fireside, than any which his readers are conscious of. If a man does act well, it is an idle criticism to investigate the motive with any view of taking exception to that. Those motives which induce to good results, must, in the long run, be good also. A man may be wicked, and yet on a special occasion act virtuously, with a view to deceive and gain under false colours some advantage which his own flag denies him; but this will not do to go on with. Thus it signifies nothing to say

that Sir Walter Scott, knowing the envious nature of the world, and the pleasure it has in decrying high merit, and picking holes in the reputation of great men, deports himself as he does, in order to avoid the cavils of his inferiors. Where we find the success so great as in this case, we are quite safe in saying that it is not by rule and compass that the object is gained, but by genuine sentiment and right-mindedness—by the influence of those feelings which prompt men to take pleasure in good and kindly offices—by that judgment which sees through the mists of prejudice and error, finds *some* merit in every man, and makes allowances for the faults and weaknesses of all;—above all, by that admirable self-command which scarcely allows any unfavourable opinion to pass the lips,—the fruit of which is, that by concealing even from himself, as it were, every unkindly emotion, he ceases to feel it. His principle is, by every means to banish from his mind all angry feelings of every description, and thus to exempt himself both from the pain of disappointment in disputes where he should fail, and from the pain of causing ill-will in cases where he might succeed. In this way he keeps on good terms with all his neighbours, without exception, and when others are disputing about boundaries and all the family of contiguous wrangling, he manages to be the universal friend. Instead of quarrelling with his eminent brother authors, whether poets or novelists (as so many others have done, and now do, to their mutual discomfort and shame), he is in friendly and thoroughly unenvious correspondence with them all. So far from any spark of jealousy being allowed to spring up, his delight is to discover and to foster, and make the most of genius wherever it exists. But the great trial is everyday life, and among everyday people: his house is filled with company all the year round, with persons of all ranks—from the highest down to the lowest class that is received at all in society; he is affable alike to them all, makes no effort at display on any occasion, is always gay and friendly, and puts every one at his ease; I consider all else as a trifle compared

with the entire simplicity of his manners, and the total apparent unconsciousness of the distinction which is his due. This, indeed, cannot possibly be assumed, but must be the result of the most entire modesty of heart, if I may use such an expression, the purest and most genuine kindness of disposition, which forbids his drawing any comparison to the disadvantage of others. He has been for many years the object of most acute and vigilant observation, and as far as my own opportunities have gone, I must agree with the general report—namely, that on no occasion has he ever betrayed the smallest symptom of vanity or affectation, or insinuated a thought bordering on presumption, or even on a consciousness of his own superiority in any respect whatsoever. Some of his oldest and most intimate friends assert that he has even of late years become more simple and kindly than ever; that this attention to those about him, and absence of all apparent concern about himself, go on, if possible, increasing with his fame and fortune. Surely if Sir Walter Scott be not a happy man, which he seems truly to be, he deserves to be so!'

Thus terminates Captain Hall's Abbotsford Journal; and with his flourish of trumpets I must drop the curtain on a scene and period of unclouded prosperity and splendour. The muffled drum is in prospect.[1]

[1] This Chapter concluded the Fifth Volume of the first Edition of these Memoirs.—[1839.]

CHAPTER LXII

Marriage of Lieutenant Walter Scott—Letter to Lady Davy —Project of Constable's Miscellany—Terry and the Adelphi Theatre—Publication of the Tales of the Crusaders—Preparations for the Life of Buonaparte —Letters to Mr. Terry, Mrs. Walter Scott, etc.— Description of Abbotsford in 1825.

1825

WITH all his acuteness, Captain Basil Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of the ball for which he was invited back to Abbotsford on the 7th of January 1825. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott's brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of a young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily among the guests as 'the pretty heiress of Lochore.' It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour, on an occasion not less interesting to the Poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends, Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, though twelve years have elapsed, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once—on the day of Sir Walter Scott's funeral.

The lady's fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage-contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter's own liferent) upon the affianced parties, in the same manner as Lochore. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he exclaimed—'I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them; and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon these young folks.' It was well for himself and his children that his auguries, which failed so miserably as to the matter of worldly wealth, were destined to no disappointment as respected considerations of a higher description. I transcribe one of the letters by which he communicated the happy event to the wide circle of friends, who were sure to sympathize in his feelings of paternal satisfaction.

'*To the Lady Davy, Grosvenor Street, London.*

'EDINBURGH, *24th January* 1825.

'MY DEAR LADY DAVY—As I know the kind interest which you take in your very sincere friend and Scotch cousin, I think you will like to hear that my eldest hope, who, not many years ago, was too bashful to accept your offered salute, and procured me the happiness of a kiss on his account, beside that which I always claim on my own, has, as he has grown older, learned a little better how such favours are to be estimated. In a word, Walter, then an awkward boy, has now turned out a smart young fellow, with good manners, and a fine figure, if a father may judge, standing well with the Horse-Guards, and much master of the scientific part of his profession, retaining at the same time much of the simple honesty of his original character, though now travelled, and acquainted with courts and camps. Some one of these good qualities, I know not which, or whether it were the united force of the whole, and particularly his proficiency in the attack of

strong places, has acquired him the affection and hand of a very sweet and pretty Mrs. Anne Page, who is here as yet known by the name of Miss Jobson of Lochore, which she exchanges next week for that of Mrs. Scott of Abbotsford. It would seem some old flirtation betwixt Walter and her had hung on both their minds, for at the conclusion of a Christmas party we learned the pretty heiress had determined to sing the old tune of—

> Mount and go—mount and make you ready,
> Mount and go, and be a soldier's lady.

Though her fortune be considerable, the favours of the public will enable me to make such settlements as her friends think very adequate. The only impediment has been the poor mother (a Highland lady of great worth and integrity), who could not brook parting with the sole object of her care and attention, to resign her to the vicissitudes of a military life, while I necessarily refused to let my son sink into a mere fox-hunting, muirfowl-shooting squire. She has at length been obliged to acquiesce rather than consent—her friends and counsellors being clear-sighted enough to see that her daughter's happiness could scarce be promoted by compelling the girl to break off a mutual attachment, and a match with a young lieutenant of hussars, sure of having a troop very soon, with a good estate in reversion, and as handsome a fellow as ever put his foot in a stirrup. So they succeeded in bringing matters to a bearing, although old Papa has practised the "profane and unprofitable art of poem-making" —and the youngster wears a pair of formidable mustachios. They are to be quiet at Abbotsford for a few days, and then they go to town to make their necessary purchases of carriage, and so forth; they are to be at my old friend Miss Dumergue's, and will scarcely see any one; but as I think you will like to call on my dear little Jane, I am sure she will see you, and I know you will be kind and indulgent to her. Here is a long letter when I only meant a line. I think they will be in London about the end of February, or beginning of March, and go from

thence to Ireland, Walter's leave of absence being short. My kindest compliments to Sir Humphrey, and pray acquaint him of this change in our family, which opens to me another vista in the dark distance of futurity, which, unless the lady had what Sir Hugh Evans calls *good gifts*, could scarce otherwise have happened during my lifetime —at least without either imprudence on Walter's part, or restrictions of habits of hospitality and comfort on my own. —Always, dear Lady Davy, your affectionate and respectful friend and cousin, WALTER SCOTT.'

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on the 3rd day of February, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards, Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer. Before he fulfilled that purpose he had the additional pleasure of seeing his son gazetted as Captain in the King's Hussars—a step for which Sir Walter advanced the large sum of £3500. Some other incidents will be gathered from his letters to his son and daughter-in-law,—of which, however, I give such copious extracts chiefly for the illustration they afford of his truly paternal tenderness for the young lady who had just been admitted into his family—and which she, from the first hour of their connexion to the last, repaid by a filial love and devotedness that formed one of the sweetest drops in his cup of life.

'*To Mrs. Walter Scott, Dublin.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *March* 20, 1825.

MY DEAREST CHILD—I had the great pleasure of receiving your kind and attentive letter from London a few days later than I ought to have done, because it was lying here while I was absent on a little excursion, of which I have to give a most interesting account. Believe me, my love, I am VERY grateful for the time you bestow on me, and that you cannot give so great happiness to any one as to me by saying you are well and happy. My

daughters, who deserve all the affection a father can bestow, are both near me, and in safe guardianship, the one under the charge of a most affectionate husband, and the other under the eye of her parents. For my sons, I have taught them, and what was more difficult, I have taught myself the philosophy, that for their own sake and their necessary advancement in life, their absences from my house must be long, and their visits short; and as they are both, I hope, able to conduct themselves wisely and honourably, I have learned to be contented to hope the best, without making myself or them uneasy by fruitless anxiety. But for YOU, my dear Jane, who have come among us with such generous and confiding affection, my stoicism must excuse me if I am more anxious than becomes either a philosopher or a hackneyed man of the world, who uses in common cases to take that world as it goes. I cannot help worrying myself with the question, whether the object of such constant and affectionate care may not feel less happy than I could wish her, in scenes which must be so new, and under privations which must be felt by you the more that your earlier life has been an entire stranger to them. I know Walter's care and affection will soften and avert these as much as possible, and if there be anything in the power of old papa to assist him in the matter, you will make him most happy by tasking that power to the utmost. I wrote to him yesterday that he might proceed in bargain for the troop, and send me the terms, that I might provide the needful, as mercantile folks call it, in time and place suitable. The rank of Captain gives, I am aware, a degree of consideration which is worth paying for; and what is still more, my little Jane, as a Captain's lady, takes better accommodation every way than is given to a subaltern's. So we must get the troop by all means, *coute que coute*.

'Now I will plague you with no more business; but give you an account of myself in the manner of Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, if ever you heard of such a person. You must suppose that you are busy with your work, and that I am telling you some long story or other, and

that you now and then look round and say *eh*, as you do when you are startled by a question or an assertion—it is not quite *eh* either, but just a little quiet interjection, which shows you are attending. You see what a close observer papa is of his child.

'Well then, when, as I calculate (as a Yankee would say), you were tossing on the waves of the Irish Channel, I was also tossing on the Vadum Scotticum of Ptolemy, on my return from the celebrated *Urbs Orrea* of Tacitus. "Eh," says Jane; "Lord, Walter, what can the old gentleman mean?"—"*Weiss nichts davon*," says the hussar, taking his cigar from under his moustaches (no, I beg pardon, he does not take out the cigar, because, from the last advices, he has used none in his London journey). He says *weiss nichts*, however, which is, in Italian, *No so*—in French, *Je ne'n scais rien*—in broad Scotch, *I neither ken nor care*. —Well, you ask Mr. Edgeworth, or the chaplain of the regiment, or the first scholar you come by—that is to say, you don't attempt to pronounce the hieroglyphical word, but you fold down the letter just at the place, show the talismanic *Urbs Orrea* and no more, and ask him in which corner of the earth Sir Walter can have been wandering? So, after a moment's recollection, he tells you that the great Roman general, Agricola, was strangely put to his trumps at the *Urbs Orrea* during his campaign in Caledonia, and that the ninth legion was surprised there by the British, and nearly destroyed; then he gets a county history and a Tacitus, and Sir Robert Sibbald's tracts, and begins to fish about, and finds at length that the *Urbs Orrea* is situated in the kingdom of Fife[1]—that it is now called Lochore—that it belonged to the Lochores—the De Vallences—the Wardlaws—the Malcolms—and Lord knows whom in succession—and then, in a sheet wet from the press, he finds it is now the property of a pretty and accomplished young lady, who, in an unthrift generosity,

[1] According to the general creed—(out of the 'Kingdom of Fife,' that is to say)—Mr. Oldbuck was quite wrong as to the identification of this *prætorium*.

has given it—with a much more valuable present, namely, *her own self*—to a lieutenant of hussars. So there the scholar shuts his book, and observes, that as there are many cairns and tumuli and other memorials upon the scene of action, he wonders whether Sir Walter had not the curiosity to open some of them. "Now heaven forbid," says Jane; "I think the old knight has stock enough for boring one with his old Border ballads and battles, without raising the bones of men who have slept 1000 years quietly on my own estate to assist him." Then I can keep silence no longer, but speak in my own proper person. "Pray do you not bore me, Mrs. Jane, and have not I a right to retaliate?"—"*Eh*," says the lady of Lochore, "how is it possible I should bore you, and so many hundred miles between us?"—"That's the very reason," says the Laird of Abbotsford, "for if you were near me, the thing would be impossible—but being, as you say, at so many hundred miles distant, I am always thinking about you, and asking myself an hundred questions which I cannot answer; for instance, I cannot go about my little improvements without teasing myself with thinking whether Jane would like the green-house larger or less—and whether Jane would like such line of walk, or such another—and whether that stile is not too high for Jane to step over." "Dear papa," says Jane, "*your own style* is really too high for my comprehension."

'Well then, I am the most indulgent papa in the world, and so you see I have turned over a new leaf. The plain sense of all this rambling stuff, which escapes from my pen as it would from my tongue, is that I have visited for a day, with Isaac Bayley,[1] your dominions of Lochore, and was excellently entertained, and as happy as I could be where everything was putting me in mind that she was absent whom I could most have wished present. It felt, somehow, like an intrusion, and as if it was not quite right that I should be in Jane's house, while Jane herself was amongst strangers: this is the sort of false colouring which imagination gives to events and circumstances.

[1] A cousin of the young lady, and the legal manager of her affairs.

Well, but I was much pleased with all I saw, and particularly with the high order Mr. Bayley has put everything into; and I climbed Bennarty like a wild goat, and scrambled through the old crags like a wild-cat, and pranced through your pastures like a wild-buck (fat enough to be in season though), and squattered through your drains like a wild-duck, and had nearly lost myself in your morasses like the ninth legion, and visited the old castle, which is *not* a *stupit place*, and in short, wandered from Dan to Beersheba, and tired myself as effectually in your dominions as I did you in mine upon a certain walk to the Rhymer's Glen. I had the offer of your pony, but the weather being too cold, I preferred walking. A cheerful little old gentleman, Mr. Birrel, and Mr. Greig the clergyman, dined with us, and your health was not forgotten.—On my retreat (Border fashion) I brought away your pony and the little chaise, believing that both will be better under Peter Mathieson's charge than at Lochore, in case of its being let to strangers. Don't you think Jane's pony will be taken care of?

'The day we arrived, the weather was gloomy and rainy—the climate sorrowful for your absence, I suppose; the next, a fine sunny frost; the third, when I came off, so checkered with hail showers as to prevent a visit I had meditated to two very interesting persons in the neighbourhood. "The Chief Commissioner and Charles Adam, I suppose?"—"Not a bit; guess again."—"Oh, Mr. Beaton of Contal, or Mr. Sym of Blair?"—"Not a bit; guess again."—"I won't guess any more."—Well then, it was two honest gentlemen hewn in stone—some of the old knights of Lochore, who were described to me as lying under your gallery in the kirk; but as I had no reason to expect a warm reception from them, I put off my visit till some more genial season.

'This puts me in mind of Warwick unvisited, and of my stupidity in not letting you know that the church is as well worth seeing as the castle, and you might have seen that, notwithstanding the badness of the morning. All the tombs of the mighty Beauchamps and Nevilles are

to be seen there, in the most magnificent style of Gothic display, and in high preservation. However, this will be for another day, and you must comfort yourself that life has something still to show.

'I trust you will soon find yourself at Edgeworthstown, where I know you will be received with open arms, for Miss Edgeworth's kindness is equal to her distinguished talents.

'I am glad you like my old acquaintance, Mathews. Some day I will make him show his talent for your amusement in private; for I know him well. It is very odd, he is often subject to fits of deep melancholy.

'This is a letter of formidable length, but our bargain is, long or short, just as the humour chances to be, and you are never to mend a pen or think upon a sentence, but write whatever comes readiest. My love to Walter. I am rather anxious to know if he has got his horses well over, and whether all his luggage has come safe. I am glad you have got a carriage to your mind; it is the best economy to get a good one at once. Above all, I shall be anxious to hear how you like the society of the ladies of the 15th. I know my Jane's quiet prudence and good sense will save her from the risk of making sudden intimacies, and induce her to consider for a little while which of her new companions may suit her best; in the meanwhile being civil to all.

'You see that I make no apology for writing silly letters; and why should you think that I can think yours stupid? There is not a *stupit* bit about them, nor any word, or so much as a comma, that is not interesting to me. Lady Scott and Anne send their kindest love to you, and grateful compliments to Mrs. Edgeworth, Miss Edgeworth, our friend Miss Harriet, and all the family at Edgeworthstown. *Buona notte, amata bene.* Good-night, darling, and take good care of yourself.—I always remain your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—They say a man's fortune depends on a wife's pleasure. I do not know how that may be; but I believe

a lady's comfort depends much on her *fille-de-chambre*, and therefore beg to know how Rebecca discharges her office.'

'*To Mrs. Walter Scott, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *March* 23, 1825.

'MY DEAREST JANE—I am afraid you will think me a merciless correspondent, assailing you with so close a fire of letters; but having a frank, I thought it as well to send you an epistle, though it can contain nothing more of interest excepting that we are all well. I can, however, add more particularly than formerly, that I learn from Mrs. Bayley that Mrs. Jobson's health is not only good, but her spirits are remarkably so, so as to give the greatest pleasure to all friends. I can see, I think, a very good reason for this; for, after the pain of the first separation from so dear an object, and after having brought her mind to believe that your present situation presented to you a fair chance for happiness, I can easily suppose that her maternal anxiety is greatly relieved from fears and apprehensions which formerly distressed her. Nothing can be more kind and more handsome than the way in which Mrs. Jobson speaks of Walter, which I mention, because it gives me sincere pleasure, and will, I am sure, afford the same to you, or rather much more.

'My troops here are sadly diminished. I have only Anne to parade for her morning walk, and to domineer over for going in thin slippers and silk stockings through dirty paths, and in lace veils through bushes and thorn brakes. I think Jane sometimes came in for a share of the lecture on these occasions. So I walk my solitary round—generally speaking—look after my labourers, and hear them regularly enquire, "If I have heard from the Captain and his Leddy?" I wish I could answer them—*yes;* but have no reason to be impatient. This is the 23rd, and I suppose Walter will be at Cork this evening to join the 15th, and that you are safe at Edgeworthstown to spend your first short term of widowhood. I hope the necessary hospitality to his mess will not occasion his dis-

sipating too much; for, to be a very strong young man, I know no one with whom what is called hard living agrees so ill. A happy change in the manners of the times fortunately renders such abuse of the good creature, wine, much less frequent and less fashionable than it was in my days and Sir Adam's. Drinking is not now the vice of the times, whatever vices and follies they may have adopted in its stead.

'I had proceeded thus far in my valuable communication, when, lo! I was alarmed by the entrance of that terrific animal a two-legged boar—one of the largest size and most tremendous powers. By the way, I learned, from no less an authority than George Canning, what my own experience has since made good, that an efficient bore must always have something respectable about him, otherwise no one would permit him to exercise his occupation. He must be, for example, a very rich man (which, perhaps, gives the greatest privilege of all)—or he must be a man of rank and condition too important to be treated *sans cérémonie*—or a man of learning (often a dreadful bore)—or of talents undoubted, or of high pretensions to wisdom and experience—or a great traveller;—in short, he must have some tangible privilege to sanction his profession. Without something of this kind, one would treat a bore as you do a vagrant mendicant, and send him off to the workhouse if he presumed to annoy you. But when properly qualified, the bore is more like a beggar with a badge and pass from his parish, which entitles him to disturb you with his importunity, whether you will or no.[1] Now, my bore is a complete gentleman and an old friend, but, unhappily for those who know him, master of all Joe Miller's stories of sailors and Irishmen, and full of quotations from the classics as hackneyed as the post-horses of Melrose. There was no remedy; I must either stand his shot within doors, or turn out with him for a long walk, and, for the sake of elbow-room, I preferred the last. Imagine an old gentleman, who has been handsome, and has still that sort of pretension which leads him to wear tight pantaloons and a

[1] *N.B.*—At the time when this letter was written, Miss Edgeworth had not published her admirable *Essay on Bores*.

smart half-boot, neatly adapted to show off his leg; suppose him as upright and straight as a poker, if the poker's head had been, by some accident, bent to one side; add to this, that he is a dogged Whig; consider that I was writing to Jane, and desired not to be interrupted by much more entertaining society—Well, I was *had*, however—fairly caught—and out we sallied, to make the best we could of each other. I felt a sort of necessity to ask him to dinner; but the invitation, like Macbeth's *amen*, stuck in my throat. For the first hour he got the lead, and kept it; but opportunities always occur to an able general, if he knows how to make use of them. In an evil hour for him, and a happy one for me, he started the topic of our intended railroad; *there* I was a match for him, having had, on Tuesday last, a meeting with Harden, the two Torwoodlees, and the engineer, on this subject, so that I had at my finger-end every *cut*, every lift, every degree of elevation or depression, every pass in the country, and every possible means of crossing them. So I kept the whip-hand of him completely, and never permitted him to get off the railway again to his own ground. In short, so thoroughly did I bore my bore, that he sickened and gave in, taking a short leave of me. Seeing him in full retreat, I *then* ventured to make the civil offer of a dinner. But the railroad had been breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and supper to boot—he hastily excused himself, and left me at double-quick time, sick of railroads, I daresay, for six months to come. But I must not forget that I am perhaps abusing the privilege I have to bore you, being that of your affectionate papa.

'How nicely we could manage without the said railroad, now the great hobby of our Teviotdale lairds, if we could by any process of conjuration waft to Abbotsford some of the coal and lime from Lochore—though if I were to wish for such impossibilities, [I] would rather desire Prince Houssein's tapestry in the Arabian Nights to bring Walter and Jane to us now and then, than I would wish for "Fife and all the lands about it."[1]

[1] A song of Dr. Blacklock's.

'By the by, Jane, after all, though she looks so demure, is a very sly girl, and keeps her accomplishments to herself. You would not talk with me about planting and laying out ground; and yet, from what you had been doing at Lochore, I see what a pretty turn you have for these matters. I wish you were here to advise me about the little pond which we passed, where, if you remember, there is a new cottage built. I intend to plant it with aquatic trees, willows, alders, poplars, and so forth—and put trouts and perches into the water—and have a preserve of wild-ducks on the pond, with Canadian geese and some other water-fowl. I am to get some eggs from Lord Traquair, of a curious species of half-reclaimed wild-ducks, which abound near his solitary old chateau, and nowhere else in Scotland that I know of; and I can get the Canadian geese, curious painted animals, that look as if they had flown out of a figured Chinese paper, from Mr. Murray of Broughton. The foolish folks, when I was absent, chose to improve on my plan by making an island in the pond, which is exactly the size and shape of a Stilton cheese. It will be useful, however, for the fowl to breed in.

'Mamma drove out your pony and carriage to-day. She was (twenty years ago), the best *lady-whip* in Edinburgh, and was delighted to find that she retained her dexterity. I hope she will continue to exercise the rein and whip now and then, as her health is much improved by moderate exercise.

'Adieu, my dear Jane. Mamma and Anne join in the kindest love and best wishes. I please myself with the idea that I shall have heard you are well and happy long before this reaches you.—Believe me always your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT.

'I hope you will take my good example, and write without caring or thinking either what you have got to say, or in what words you say it.'

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., etc. etc., Barracks, Cork.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *4th April* 1825.

'MY DEAR CHILDREN—I received your joint composition without a date, but which circumstances enabled me to fix it as written upon the 24th or 25th March. I am very sorry on Jane's account for the unpleasant necessity of night journeys, and the inconvenience of bad quarters. I almost wish you had stuck by your original plan of leaving Jane at Edgeworthstown. As for you, Mr. Walter, I do not grudge your being obliged to pay a little deference to the wig and gown. *Cedant arma togæ* is a lesson well taught at an assize. But although you, thanks to the discipline of the most excellent of fathers, have been taught not to feel greatly the inconvenience of night journeys or bad lodgings, yet my poor Jane, who has not had these advantages, must, I fear, feel very uncomfortable; and I hope you will lay your plans so that she shall be exposed to them as little as possible. I like old songs, and I like to hear Jane sing them; but I would not like that she had cause to sing,

> Oh but I'm weary with wandering,
> Oh but my fortunes are bad;
> It sets not a gentle young lady
> To follow a sodger lad.

But against the recurrence of these inconveniences, I am sure Walter will provide as well as he can.—I hope you have delivered your introduction to Mrs. Scott (of Harden's) friend in the neighbourhood of Cork. Good introductions should never be neglected, though numerous ones are rather a bore. A lady's society, especially when entering on life, should be, as they are said to choose their liquor, little but good; and Mrs. Scott being really a woman of fashion—a character not quite so frequent in reality as aspired to—and being, besides, such an old friend of yours, is likely to introduce you to valuable and creditable society.

'We had a visit from Lockhart yesterday. He rode

out on Saturday with a friend, and they dined here, remained Sunday, and left us this morning early. I feel obliged to him for going immediately to Mrs. Jobson's when the explosion took place so near her, in my friend Colin Mackenzie's premises.[1] She had experienced no inconvenience but the immediate fright, for the shock was tremendous—and was rather proud of the substantial capacity of the house, which had not a pane broken, when many of the adjoining tenements scarce had one left.

'We have had our share of casualties. Sibyl came down with me, but without any injury; but Tom Purdie being sent on some business by Mr. Laidlaw, she fell with him, and rolled over him, and bruised him very much. This is rather too bad, so I shall be on the *pavé* for a pony, my neck being rather precious.

'Touching Colonel Thwackwell,[2] of whom I know nothing but the name, which would bespeak him a strict disciplinarian, I suppose you are now arrived at that time of life you can take your ground from your observation, without being influenced by the sort of cabal which often exists in our army, especially in the corps where the officers are men of fortunes or expectations, against a commanding officer. The execution of their duty is not *always* popular with young men, who may like the dress and show of a regimental officer; and it often happens that a little pettishness on the one side begets a little repulsiveness of manner on the other, so that it becomes the question how the one shall command, and the other obey, in the way most disagreeable to the other, without a tangible infringement of rules. This is the shame of our army, and in a greater degree that of our navy. A humble and reflecting man keeps as much aloof as possible from such feuds. You have seen the world more than when you joined the 18th.

'The Catholic question seems likely to be carried at

[1] This alludes to an explosion of gas in Shandwick Place, Edinburgh.

[2] Sir Walter had misread, or chose to miswrite, the name of his son's new commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel *Thackwell*.

last. I hope, though I doubt it a little, that Ireland will be the quieter, and the people more happy. I suspect, however, that it is laying a plaster to the foot while the head aches, and that the fault is in the landholder's extreme exactions, not in the disabilities of the Catholics, or any more remote cause.

'My dear Jane, pray take care of yourself, and write me soon how you are and what you are doing. I hope it will contain a more pleasant account of your travels than the last. Mamma and Anne send best loves. I hope my various letters have all come to your hand, and am, my dear children, always your affectionate father,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., Lieutenant 15th Hussars, Dublin.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *27th April* 1825.

'MY DEAR WALTER—I received to-day your interesting communication, and have written to Edinburgh to remit the price of this troop as soon as possible. I can make this out without troubling Mr. Bayley; but it will pare my nails short for the summer, and I fear prevent my paying your carriage, as I had intended.

'Nicol is certainly going to sell Faldonside.[1] The Nabal asks £40,000—at least £5000 too much. Yet in the present low rate of money, and general thirst for land, there is no saying but he may get a fool to offer him his price or near it. I should like to know your views about this matter, as it is more your concern than mine, since you will, I hope, have a much longer date of it. I think I could work it all off during my life, and also improve the estate highly; but then it is always a heavy burden, and I would not like to undertake it, unless I was sure that Jane and you desired such an augmentation of territory. I do not mean to do anything hasty, but, as an opportunity may cast up suddenly, I should like to know your mind.

'I conclude, this being 27th April, that you are all

[1] See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 320.

snugly settled in Dublin. I am a little afraid of the gaieties for Jane, and hope she will be gay moderately, that she may be gay long. The frequent habit of late hours is always detrimental to health, and sometimes has consequences which last for life. *Avis au lecteur;* of course I do not expect you to shut yourselves up at your period of life. Your course of gaiety at Cork reminds me of Jack Johnstone's song,

> Then we'll visit the Callaghans, Brallaghans,
> Nowlans, and Dowlans likewise,
> And bother them all with the beauty
> Which streams from my Judy's (or Jeanie's) black eyes.

'We have better accounts of little Johnnie of late—his cough is over for the present, and the learned cannot settle whether it has been the hooping-cough or no. Sophia talks of taking him to Germiston. Lockhart comes here for the Circuit, and I expect him to-morrow.

'Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson bring most excellent accounts of Mrs. Jobson's good health and spirits. Sir Henry Jardine (he writes himself no less now) hath had the dignity of knighthood inflicted on him. Mamma and Anne join in kind love. I expect a long letter from Jane one of these days soon; she writes too well not to write with ease to herself, and therefore I am resolved her talent shall not be idle, if a little jogging can prevail on her to exercise it.

'You have never said a word of your horses, nor how you have come on with your domestics, those necessary plagues of our life. Two or three days since, that cub of Sir Adam's chose to amuse himself with flinging crackers about the hall here when we were at dinner. I think I gave him a proper jobation.

'Here is the first wet day we have had—very welcome, as the earth required it much, and the season was backward. I can hear Bogie whistling for joy.—Your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT.'

In May 1825, Sir Walter's friend Terry, and his able

brother comedian, Mr. Frederick Yates, entered on a negotiation, which terminated, in July, in their becoming joint lessees and managers of the Adelphi Theatre, London. Terry requested Scott and Ballantyne to assist him on this occasion by some advance of money, or if that should be inconvenient, by the use of their credit. They were both very anxious to serve him; but Sir Walter had a poor opinion of speculations in theatrical property, and, moreover, entertained suspicions, too well justified by the result, that Terry was not much qualified for conducting the pecuniary part of such a business. Ultimately Ballantyne, who shared these scruples, became Terry's security for a considerable sum (I think £500), and Sir Walter pledged his credit in like manner to the extent of £1250. He had, in the sequel, to pay off both this sum and that for which Ballantyne had engaged.

Several letters were interchanged before Terry received the support he had requested from his Scotch friends; and I must extract two of Sir Walter's.—The first is, in my opinion, when considered with reference to the time at which it was written, and the then near though unforeseen result of the writer's own commercial speculations, as remarkable a document as was ever penned. It is, moreover, full of shrewd and curious suggestions touching theatrical affairs in general — from the highest to the lowest. The second is, at least, a specimen of friendly caution and delicate advice most inimitably characteristic of Scott.

'*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

'EDINBURGH, *May 5th*, 1825.

'MY DEAR TERRY—I received your long confidential letter; and as the matter is in every respect important, I have given it my anxious consideration. "The plot is a good plot, and the friends, though I know them only by your report, are, I doubt not, good friends, and full of expectation."[1] There are, however, two particulars

[1] Hotspur, 1st King Henry IV. Act II. Scene 3.

unfavourable to all theatrical speculations, and of which you are probably better aware than I am. The first is, that every scheme depending on public caprice must be irregular in its returns. I remember John Kemble, complaining to me of Harry Siddons' anxious and hypochondriac fears about his Edinburgh concern, said, "He does not consider that no theatre whatever can be considered as a regular source of income, but must be viewed as a lottery, at one time strikingly successful, at another a total failure." Now this affects your scheme in two ways. First, you can hardly expect, I fear, your returns to be so regular every season, even though your calculation be just as to the recent average. And, secondly, you must secure some fund, either of money or credit, to meet those blanks and bad seasons which must occasionally occur. The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills, and buying necessary articles at high prices and of inferior quality, for the sake of long credit. I own your plan would have appeared to me more solid, though less splendid, if Mr. Jones, or any other monied man, had retained one-half or one-third of the adventure; for every speculation requires a certain command of money, and cannot be conducted with any plausibility upon credit alone. It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment arrive to a certainty. Those of supply are less certain, and cannot be made to meet the demands with the same accuracy. A month's difference between demand and receipt makes loss of credit; loss of credit is in such a case ruin. I would advise you and Mr. Yates to consider this, and sacrifice some view of profit to obtain stability by the assistance of some monied man—a class of whom many are in your great city just gaping for such an opportunity to lay out cash to advantage.

'This difficulty—the want of solid cash—is an obstacle to all attempts whatsoever; but there is something, it would seem, peculiarly difficult in managing a theatre. All who practise the fine arts in any department are, from the very temperament necessary to success, more irritable,

jealous, and capricious, than other men made up of heavier elements; but the jealousy among players is signally active, because their very persons are brought into direct comparison, and from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot they are pitted by the public in express rivalry against each other. Besides, greatly as the profession has risen in character of late years, theatrical talent must still be found frequently allied with imperfect general education, low habits, and sometimes the follies and vices which arise out of them. All this makes, I should think, a theatre very difficult to manage, and liable to sudden checks when your cattle *jibb*, or do not work kindly. I think you have much of the talent to manage this; and bating a little indolence, which you can always conquer when you have a mind and a motive, I know no one whose taste, temper, and good sense make him more likely to gain and secure the necessary influence over the performers. But *il faut de l'argent*—you must be careful in your situation, that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of the blunt. This is the second particular, I think, unfavourable to undertakings of a theatrical description, and against which I would wish to see you guarded by a more ample fund than your plan involves.

'You have of course ascertained from the books of the theatre that the returns of receipts are correct; but I see no provision made for wear and tear of stock, expense of getting up new pieces, etc., which, in such an undertaking, must be considerable. Perhaps it is included in the charge of £36 per night; but if not, it seems to me that it will materially alter your calculations for the worse, for you are naturally disposed to be liberal in such expenses, and the public will expect it. Without baits the fish cannot be caught. I do not state these particulars from any wish to avoid assisting you in this undertaking; much the contrary. If I saw the prospect of your getting fairly on the wing, nothing could give me more pleasure than to assist to the extent of my means, and I shall only, in that case, regret that they are at present more limited

than I could wish, by circumstances which I will presently tell you. But I should not like to see you take flight, like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas—only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake. This would be a most heart-breaking business, and would hang like a millstone about your neck for all your life. Capital and talent will do excellent things together; but depend on it, talent without capital will no more carry on an extensive and progressive undertaking of this nature, than a racehorse will draw a Newcastle waggon. Now, I cannot at present assist you with ready money, which is the great object in your undertaking. This year has been, owing to many reasons, the heaviest of my expenditure, and the least fruitful of profit, because various anxieties attending Walter's marriage, and feasting, etc., after it, have kept me from my usual lucrative labours. It has no doubt been a most advantageous concern, for he has got an amiable girl, whom he loves, and who is warmly attached to him, with a very considerable fortune. But I have had to find cash for the purchase of a troop for him—about £3500: *item*, the bride's jewels, and so forth, becoming her situation and fortune, £500: *item*, for a remount to him on joining his regiment, equipage for quarters, carriage, and other things, that they may enter life with a free income, £1000 at least. Moreover, I am a sharer to the extent of £1500 on a railroad, which will bring coals and lime here at half price, and double the rent of the arable part of my property, but is dead outlay in the meantime; and I have shares in the oil-gas, and other promising concerns, not having resisted the mania of the day, though I have yielded to it but soberly; also, I have the dregs of Abbotsford House to pay for—and all besides my usual considerable expenditure; so I must look for some months to be put to every corner of my saddle. I could not let my son marry her like a beggar; but, in the meantime, I am like my namesake in the days of the crusades—Walter the Penniless.

'Every one grumbles at his own profession, but here is the devil of a calling for you, where a man pays £3000 for an annuity of £400 a year and less—renounces his

free-will in almost every respect—must rise at five every morning to see horses curried—dare not sleep out of a particular town without the leave of a cross colonel, who is often disposed to refuse it merely because he has the power to do so; and, last of all, may be sent to the most unhealthy climates to die of the rot, or be shot like a blackcock. There is a per contra, to be sure—fine clothes and fame; but the first must be paid for, and the other is not come by, by one out of the hundred. I shall be anxious to know what you are able to do. Your ready is the devil—

> The thing may to-morrow be all in your power,
> But the money, gadzooks, must be paid in an hour.

If you were once set a-rolling, time would come round with me, and then I should be able to help you a little more than at present. Meanwhile, I am willing to help you with my credit by becoming one of your guarantees to the extent of £1250.

'But what I am most anxious about is to know how you raise the £5000 cash: if by bills and discounts, I beg to say I must decline having to do with the business at all; for besides the immense expense of renewals, that mode of raising money is always liable to some sudden check, which throws you on your back at once, and I should then have hurt myself and deprived myself of the means of helping you some other way. If you can get such a sum in loan for a term of years certain, that would do well. Still better, I think, could you get a monied partner in the concern to pay the sum down, and hold some £2000 more ready for current expenses. I wish to know whether in the £36 for nightly expenses you include your own salary, within which you would probably think it prudent to restrain your own expenses, at least for a year or two; for, believing as I do, that your calculation of £70 per night (five per cent on the outlay) is rather sanguine, I would like to know that your own and Mr. Yates's expenses were provided for, so as to leave the receipts, whatever they may be, free to answer the burdens.

If they do so, you will have great reason to be contented. I need not add that Theodore Hook's assistance will be *impayable*. On the whole, my apprehension is for want of money in the outset. Should you either start with marked success, or have friends sufficient to carry on at some disadvantage for a season or two, I should have little fear; but great attention and regularity will be necessary. You are no great accountant yourself, any more than I am, but I trust Mr. Yates is. All rests with prudence and management. Murray is making a fortune for his sister and family on the very bargain which Siddons, poor fellow, could not have sustained for two years longer. If I have seemed more cautious in this matter than you might expect from my sincere regard for you, it is because caution is as necessary for you as myself; and I assure you I think as deeply on your account as on my own. I beg kind compliments to Mrs. Terry, and inclose a lock of my gray hair, which Jane desired me to send you for some brooch or clasp at Hamlet's.—Ever yours, very truly,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To the Same.*

'MY DEAR TERRY—You have long ere this heard from honest James that he accedes to your proposal of becoming one of your sureties. I did not think it right in the first instance either to encourage or deter him from taking this step, but sent him the whole correspondence upon the subject, that he might judge for himself, and I fancy he concluded that his own risk of loss was not by any means in proportion to your fair prospect of advantage.

'There is an idea among some of your acquaintance, which I partly acquiesce in, that you are in general somewhat of a procrastinator. I believe I have noticed the same thing myself; but then I consider it the habit of one accustomed to alternations of severe exertion and great indolence; and I have no doubt that it will give place to the necessity of following out a regular, stated, and

daily business—where every hour brings its own peculiar duties, and you feel yourself, like the mail-coach, compelled to be *in to time*. I know such routine always cures me of the habit of indolence, which on other occasions I give way to as much as any man. This objection to the success which all agree is in your own power, I have heard coupled with another, which is also founded on close observation of your character, and connected with an excellent point of it; it is, that you will be too desirous to do things perfectly well, to consider the *petite économie* necessary to a very extensive undertaking. This, however, is easily guarded against. I remember Mrs. John Kemble telling me how much she had saved by degrading some unfortunate figurantes into paper veils and ruffles. I think it was a round sum, and without going such lengths, I fear severer economy than one would like to practise is essential to making a theatre profitable. Now, I have mentioned the only two personal circumstances which induce envy to lift her voice against your prospects. I think it right you should know them, for there is something to be considered in both particulars; I would not mention them till the affair was finished, because I would not have you think I was sheltering myself under such apologies. That the perils rising out of them are not formidable in my eyes, I have sufficiently shown; and I think it right to mention them now. I know I need not apologize for my frankness, nor will you regard it either as an undue exercise of the privilege of an adviser, or an abuse of the circumstances in which this matter has placed us.—Yours ever, with best love to Mrs. Terry and Watt,

'W. SCOTT.'

While this business of Terry's was under consideration, Scott asked me to go out with him one Saturday to Abbotsford, to meet Constable and James Ballantyne, who were to be there for a quiet consultation on some projects of great importance. I had shortly before assisted at a minor conclave held at Constable's villa of Polton, and was not surprised that Sir Walter should have considered

his publisher's new plans worthy of very ample deliberation. He now opened them in more fulness of detail, and explained his views in a manner that might well excite admiration, not unmixed with alarm. Constable was meditating nothing less than a total revolution in the art and traffic of bookselling; and the exulting and blazing fancy with which he expanded and embellished his visions of success, hitherto undreamt of in the philosophy of the trade, might almost have induced serious suspicions of his sanity, but for the curious accumulation of pregnant facts on which he rested his justification, and the dexterous sagacity with which he uncoiled his practical inferences. He startled us at the outset by saying, 'Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best; but printing and bookselling, as instruments for enlightening and entertaining mankind, and, of course, for making money, are as yet in mere infancy. Yes, the trade are in their cradle.' Scott eyed the florid bookseller's beaming countenance, and the solemn stare with which the equally portly printer was listening, and pushing round the bottles with a hearty chuckle, bade me 'Give our twa *sonsie babbies* a drap mother's milk.' Constable sucked in fresh inspiration, and proceeded to say that, wild as we might think him, his new plans had been suggested by, and were in fact mainly grounded upon, a sufficiently prosaic authority—namely, the annual schedule of assessed taxes, a copy of which interesting document he drew from his pocket, and substituted for his *D'Oyley*. It was copiously diversified, 'text and margent,' by figures and calculations in his own handwriting, which I for one might have regarded with less reverence, had I known at the time this 'great arithmetician's' rooted aversion and contempt for all examination of his own balance-sheet. His lecture on these columns and ciphers was, however, as profound as ingenious. He had taken vast pains to fill in the number of persons who might fairly be supposed to pay the taxes for each separate article of luxury; and his conclusion was, that the immense majority of British families, endowed with liberal fortunes, had never yet conceived

the remotest idea that their domestic arrangements were incomplete, unless they expended some considerable sum annually upon the purchase of books. 'Take,' said he, 'this one absurd and contemptible *item* of the tax on hair-powder; the use of it is almost entirely gone out of fashion. Bating a few parsons' and lawyers' wigs, it may be said that hair-powder is confined to the *flunkeys*, and indeed to the livery servants of great and splendid houses exclusively; nay, in many even of these, it is already quite laid aside. Nevertheless, for each head that is thus vilified in Great Britain, a guinea is paid yearly to the Exchequer; and the taxes in that schedule are an army, compared to the purchasers of even the best and most popular of books.' He went on in the same vein about armorial bearings, hunters, racers, and four-wheeled carriages; and having demonstrated that hundreds of thousands in this magnificent country held, as necessary to their personal comfort, and the maintenance of decent station, articles upon articles of costly elegance, of which their forefathers never dreamt, said that on the whole, however usual it was to talk of the extended scale of literary transactions in modern days, our self-love never deceived us more grossly than when we fancied our notions as to the matter of books had advanced in at all a corresponding proportion. 'On the contrary,' cried Constable, 'I am satisfied that the demand for Shakspeare's plays, contemptible as we hold it to have been, in the time of Elizabeth and James, was more creditable to the classes who really indulged in any sort of elegance then, than the sale of Childe Harold or Waverley, triumphantly as people talk, is to the alleged expansion of taste and intelligence in this nineteenth century.'

Scott helped him on by interposing, that at that moment he had a rich valley crowded with handsome houses under his view, and yet much doubted whether any laird within ten miles spent ten pounds per annum on the literature of the day — which he, of course, distinguished from its periodical press. 'No,' said Constable, 'there is no market among them that's worth one's thinking about.

They are contented with a review or a magazine, or at best with a paltry subscription to some circulating library forty miles off. But if I live for half-a-dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut poke*. Ay, and what's that?' he continued, warming and puffing; 'why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for *the novels?*'—'I see your drift, my man,' says Sir Walter; 'you're for being like Billy Pitt in Gilray's print—you want to get into the salt-box yourself.'—'Yes,' he responded (using a favourite adjuration)—'I have hitherto been thinking only of the wax lights, but before I'm a twelvemonth older I shall have my hand upon the tallow.' —'Troth,' says Scott, 'you are indeed likely to be "The grand Napoleon of the realms of *print*."'—'If you outlive me,' says Constable, with a regal smile, 'I bespeak that line for my tombstone; but, in the meantime, may I presume to ask you to be my right-hand man when I open my campaign of Marengo? I have now settled my outline of operations—a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed!— twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a week!'

Many a previous consultation, and many a solitary meditation too, prompted Scott's answer. 'Your plan,' said he, 'cannot fail, provided the books be really good; but you must not start until you have not only leading columns, but depth upon depth of reserve in thorough order. I am willing to do my part in this grand enterprise. Often, of late, have I felt that the vein of fiction was nearly worked out; often, as you all know, have I been thinking seriously of turning my hand to history.

I am of opinion that historical writing has no more been adapted to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way, than you allege as to the shape and price of books in general. What say you to taking the field with a Life of the *other* Napoleon?'

The reader does not need to be told that the series of cheap volumes, subsequently issued under the title of 'Constable's Miscellany,' was the scheme on which this great bookseller was brooding. Before he left Abbotsford, it was arranged that the first number of this collection should consist of one half of Waverley; the second, of the first section of a 'Life of Napoleon Buonaparte by the author of Waverley'; that this Life should be comprised in four of these numbers; and that, until the whole series of his novels should have been issued, a volume every second month, in this new and uncostly form, he should keep the Ballantyne press going with a series of historical works, to be issued on the alternate months. Such were, as far as Scott was concerned, the first outlines of a daring plan never destined to be carried into execution on the gigantic scale, or with the grand appliances which the projector contemplated, but destined, nevertheless, to lead the way in one of the greatest revolutions that literary history will ever have to record—a revolution not the less sure to be completed, though as yet, after the lapse of twelve years, we see only its beginnings.

Some circumstances in the progress of the Tales of the Crusaders, begun some months before, and now on the eve of publication, must have been uppermost in Scott's mind when he met Constable's proposals on this occasion with so much alacrity. The story of The Betrothed—(to which he was mainly prompted by the lively and instructing conversation on Welsh history and antiquities of his friend Archdeacon Williams)—found no favour as it advanced with James Ballantyne; and so heavily did the critical printer's candid remonstrances weigh on the author, that he at length lost heart about the matter altogether, and determined to cancel it for ever. The

tale, however, all but a chapter or two, had been printed off, and both publisher and printer paused about committing such a mass to the flames. The sheets were hung up meanwhile in Messrs. Ballantyne's warehouse, and Scott, roused by the spur of disappointment, began another story—The Talisman—in which James hailed better omens. His satisfaction went on increasing as the MS. flowed in upon him; and he at last pronounced The Talisman such a masterpiece, that The Betrothed might venture abroad under its wing. Sir Walter was now reluctant on that subject, and said he would rather write two more new novels than the few pages necessary to complete his unfortunate Betrothed. But while he hesitated, the German newspapers announced '*a new romance by the author of Waverley*' as about to issue from the press of Leipsig. There was some ground for suspecting that a set of the suspended sheets might have been purloined and sold to a pirate, and this consideration put an end to his scruples. And when the German did publish the fabrication, entitled *Walladmor*, it could no longer be doubtful that some reader of Scott's sheets had communicated at least the fact that he was breaking ground in Wales.

Early in June, then, the Tales of the Crusaders were put forth; and, as Mr. Ballantyne had predicted, the brightness of the Talisman dazzled the eyes of the million as to the defects of the twin-story. Few of these publications had a more enthusiastic greeting; and Scott's literary plans were, as the reader will see reason to infer, considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his Saladin and Cœur de Lion.

To return for a moment to our merry conclave at Abbotsford. Constable's vast chapter of embryo schemes was discussed more leisurely on the following Monday morning, when we drove to the crags of Smailholm and the Abbey of Dryburgh, both poet and publisher talking over the past and the future course of their lives, and agreeing, as far as I could penetrate, that the years to

come were likely to be more prosperous than any they had as yet seen. In the evening, too, this being his friend's first visit since the mansion had been completed, Scott (though there were no ladies and few servants) had the hall and library lighted up, that he might show him everything to the most sparkling advantage. With what serenity did he walk about those splendid apartments, handling books, expounding armour and pictures, and rejoicing in the Babylon which he had built!

If the reader has not recently looked into the original Introduction to the Tales of the Crusaders, it will amuse him to trace in that little extravaganza Sir Walter's own embellishment of these colloquies with Constable and Ballantyne. The title is, 'Minutes of Sederunt of the Shareholders designing to form a Joint-Stock Company, united for the purpose of Writing and Publishing the Class of Works called the Waverley Novels, held in the Waterloo Tavern, Regent Bridge, Edinburgh, on the 1st of June 1825.' The notion of casting a preface into this form could hardly have occurred in any other year; the humorist had not far to seek for his 'palpable hit.' The 'Gentlemen and others interested in the celebrated publications called the Waverley Novels' had all participated in the general delusions which presented so broad a mark; and their own proper 'bubbles' were at the biggest —in other words, near enough the bursting.

As regards Sir Walter himself, it is not possible now to recall the jocularities of this essay without wonder and sadness. His own share in speculations remote from literature, was not indeed a very heavy one; but how remarkable that a passage like the following should have dropped from his pen who was just about to see the apparently earth-built pillars of his worldly fortune shattered in ruin, merely because, not contented with being the first author of his age, he had chosen also to be his own printer and his own bookseller!

'In the patriarchal period,' we read, 'a man is his own weaver, tailor, butcher, shoemaker, and so forth; and, in the age of Stock-companies, as the present may be called, an individual may be said, in

one sense, to exercise the same plurality of trades. In fact, a man who has dipped largely into these speculations, may combine his own expenditure with the improvement of his own income, just like the ingenious hydraulic machine, which, by its very waste, raises its own supplies of water. Such a person buys his bread from his own Baking Company, his milk and cheese from his own Dairy Company, takes off a new coat for the benefit of his own Clothing Company, illuminates his house to advance his own Gas Establishment, and drinks an additional bottle of wine for the benefit of the General Wine Importation Company, of which he is himself a member. Every act, which would otherwise be one of mere extravagance, is, to such a person, seasoned with the *odor lucri*, and reconciled to prudence. Even if the price of the article consumed be extravagant, and the quality indifferent, the person, who is in a manner his own customer, is only imposed upon for his own benefit. Nay, if the Joint-stock Company of Undertakers shall unite with the Medical Faculty, as proposed by the late facetious Doctor G——, under the firm of Death and the Doctor, the shareholder might contrive to secure to his heirs a handsome slice of his own deathbed and funeral expenses.'

Since I have quoted this Introduction, I may as well give also the passage in which the 'Eidolon Chairman' is made to announce the new direction his exertions were about to take, in furtherance of the grand 'Joint-stock Adventure' for which Constable had been soliciting his alliance. The paternal shadow thus addresses his mutinous offspring—Cleishbotham, Oldbuck, Clutterbuck, Dryasdust, and the rest:—

It signifies nothing speaking — I will no longer avail myself of such weak ministers as you—I will discard you—I will unbeget you, as Sir Anthony Absolute says—I will leave you and your whole hacked stock in trade—your caverns and your castles—your modern antiques and your antiquated moderns—your confusion of times, manners, and circumstances — your properties, as player-folk say of scenery and dresses—the whole of your exhausted expedients, to the fools who choose to deal with them. I will vindicate my own fame with my own right hand, without appealing to such halting assistants,

Whom I have used for sport, rather than need.

—I will lay my foundations better than on quicksands—I will rear my structure of better materials than painted cards; in a word, I will write HISTORY! . . .

As the confusion began to abate, more than one member of the meeting was seen to touch his forehead significantly, while Captain Clatterbuck humm'd,

Be by your friends advised,
Too rash, too hasty dad,
Maugre your bolts and wise head,
The world will think you mad.[1]

'The world, and you, gentlemen, may think what you please,' said the Chairman, elevating his voice; 'but I intend to write the most wonderful book which the world ever read—a book in which every incident shall be incredible, yet strictly true—a work recalling recollections with which the ears of this generation once tingled, and which shall be read by our children with an admiration approaching to incredulity. Such shall be the LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, by the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY!'[2]

Sir Walter began, without delay, what was meant to be a very short preliminary sketch of the French Revolution, prior to the appearance of his hero upon the scene of action. This, he thought, might be done almost *currente calamo;* for his personal recollection of all the great events as they occurred was vivid, and he had not failed to peruse every book of any considerable importance on these subjects as it issued from the press. He apprehended the necessity, on the other hand, of more laborious study in the way of reading than he had for many years had occasion for, before he could enter with advantage upon Buonaparte's military career; and Constable accordingly set about collecting a new library of printed materials, which continued from day to day pouring in upon him, till his little parlour in Castle Street looked more like an auctioneer's premises than an author's. The first waggon delivered itself of about a hundred huge folios of the Moniteur; and London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels were all laid under contribution to meet the bold demands of his magnificent purveyor; while he himself and his confidential friends embraced every possible means of securing the use of written documents at home and abroad. The rapid accumulation of books and MSS. was at once flattering and alarming; and one of his notes to me, about the middle of June, had these rhymes by way of postscript:—

[1] *Midas*—a farce.
[2] See Waverley Novels, vol. xxxvii. p. 38, Introd.

'When with Poetry dealing
Room enough in a shieling:
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel:
Though my back I should rub
On Diogenes' tub,
How my fancy could prance
In a dance of romance!
But my house I must swap
With some Brobdignag chap,
Ere I grapple, God bless me! with Emperor Nap.'

In the meantime he advanced with his Introduction; and, catching fire as the theme expanded before him, had so soon several chapters in his desk, without having travelled over half the ground assigned for them, that Constable saw it would be in vain to hope for the completion of the work within four tiny duodecimos. They resolved that it should be published, in the first instance, as a separate book, in four volumes of the same size with the Tales of the Crusaders, but with more pages and more letterpress to each page. Scarcely had this been settled before it became obvious that four such volumes, however closely printed, would never suffice; and the number was week after week extended—with corresponding alterations as to the rate of the author's payment. Mr. Constable still considered the appearance of the second edition of the Life of Napoleon in his Miscellany as the great point on which the fortunes of that undertaking were to turn; and its commencement was in consequence adjourned; which, however, must have been the case at any rate, as he found, on enquiry, that the stock on hand of the already various editions of the Waverley Novels was much greater than he had calculated; and therefore some interval must be allowed to elapse, before, with fairness to the retail trade, he could throw that long series of volumes into any cheaper form.

ABBOTSFORD IN 1825.

[*Various critics and correspondents have complained that the first edition of these Memoirs did not include any clear and particular description of the House of Abbotsford, in its finished condition. It appeared to me that Sir Walter's letters contained as much information on the subject as might satisfy most readers; but I now insert the fullest account that I know of—one drawn up in* 1829, *for a keepsake called the Anniversary, of which Mr. Allan Cunningham had at that time the management. It was written in the character of an imaginary American, supposed to visit Scotland in the summer of* 1825, *and to examine the place, when Sir Walter was absent, under the guidance of one of the neighbouring gentlemen, tolerably familiar with its history.*

I am afraid there are some inaccuracies in the sketch—but it is probably nearer the truth than anything I could substitute for it, now that many years have passed since I saw Abbotsford. Some passages have been omitted, and a few mis-statements corrected.]

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'SOME fifteen or sixteen years ago, * * * * tells me, there was not a more unlovely spot, in this part of the world, than that on which Abbotsford now exhibits all its quaint architecture and beautiful accompaniment of garden and woodland. A mean farmhouse stood on part of the site of the present edifice; a "kail-yard" bloomed where the stately embattled court-yard now spreads itself; and for a thousand acres of flourishing plantations, half of which have all the appearance of being twice as old as they really are, there was but a single long straggling stripe of unthriving firs. The river must needs remain *in statu*

quo; and I will not believe that any place so near those clearest and sweetest of all waters could ever have been quite destitute of charms. The scene, however, was no doubt wild enough—a naked moor—a few turnip fields painfully reclaimed from it—a Scotch cottage—a Scotch farm-yard, and some Scotch firs. It is difficult to imagine a more complete contrast to the Abbotsford of 1825.

'Sir W. is, as you have no doubt heard, a most zealous agriculturist, and aboriculturist especially; and he is allowed to have done things with this estate, since it came into his possession, which would have been reckoned wonders, even if they had occupied the whole of a clever and skilful man's attention, during more years than have elapsed since he began to write himself Laird of Abbotsford. He has some excellent arable land on the banks of the Tweed, and towards the little town of Melrose, which lies three miles from the mansion; but the bulk of the property is hilly country, with deep narrow dells interlacing it. Of this he has planted fully one half, and it is admitted on all hands that his rising forest has been laid out, arranged, and managed with consummate taste, care, and success; so much so, that the general appearance of Tweedside, for some miles, is already quite altered by the graceful ranges of his woodland; and that the produce of these plantations must, in the course of twenty or thirty years more, add immensely to the yearly rental of the estate. In the meantime, the shelter afforded by the woods to the sheep-walks reserved amidst them, has prodigiously improved the pasturage, and half the surface yields already double the rent the whole was ever thought capable of affording, while in the old unprotected condition. All through these woods there are broad riding-ways, kept in capital order, and conducted in such excellent taste, that we might wander for weeks amidst their windings without exhausting the beauties of the Poet's lounge. There are scores of waterfalls in the ravines, and near every one of them you find benches or bowers at the most picturesque points of view. There are two or three small mountain lakes included in the

domain—the largest perhaps a mile in circumference; and of these also every advantage has been taken.

'But I am keeping you too long away from "The Roof-tree of Monkbarns," which is situated on the brink of the last of a series of irregular hills, descending from the elevation of the Eildons to the Tweed. On all sides, except towards the river, the house connects itself with the gardens (according to the old fashion now generally condemned);—so that there is no want of air and space about the habitation. The building is such a one, I daresay, as nobody but he would ever have dreamed of erecting; or if he had, escaped being quizzed for his pains. Yet it is eminently imposing in its general effect; and in most of its details, not only full of historical interest, but beauty also. It is no doubt a thing of shreds and patches, but they have been combined by a masterly hand; and if there be some whimsicalities, that in an ordinary case might have called up a smile, who is likely now or hereafter to contemplate such a monument of such a man's peculiar tastes and fancies, without feelings of a far different order?

'By the principal approach you come very suddenly on the edifice;—as the French would say, "Vous *tombez* sur le château"; but this evil, if evil it be, was unavoidable, in consequence of the vicinity of a public road, which cuts off the *château* and its *plaisance* from the main body of park and wood. The gateway is a lofty arch rising out of an embattled wall of considerable height; and the *iougs*, as they are styled, those well-known emblems of feudal authority, hang rusty at the side; this pair being relics from that great citadel of the old Douglases, Thrieve Castle in Galloway. On entering, you find yourself within an enclosure of perhaps half an acre, two sides thereof being protected by the high wall above mentioned, all along which, inside, a trellised walk extends itself—broad, cool, and dark overhead with roses and honeysuckles. The third side, to the east, shows a screen of open arches of Gothic stonework, filled between with a network of iron, not visible until you come close to it,

and affording therefore delightful glimpses of the gardens, which spread upwards with many architectural ornaments of turret, porch, urn, vase, etc. This elegant screen abuts on the eastern extremity of the house, which runs along the whole of the northern side (and a small part of the western) of the great enclosure. Within this enclosure there is room for a piece of the most *elaborate* turf; and rosaries, of all manner of shapes and sizes, gradually connect this green pavement with the roof of the trellis-walk, a verdant cloister, over which appears the grey wall with its little turrets; and over that again climb oak, elm, birch, and hazel, up a steep bank—so steep, that the trees, young as they are, give already all the effect of a sweeping amphitheatre of wood. The background on that side is wholly forest; on the east, garden loses itself in forest by degrees; on the west, there is wood on wood also, but with glimpses of the Tweed between; and in the distance (some half-a-dozen miles off) a complete *sierra*, the ridge of the mountains between Tweed and Yarrow.

'The house is more than one hundred and fifty feet long in front, as I paced it; was built at two different onsets; has a tall tower at either end, the one not the least like the other; presents sundry *crowfooted*, *alias* zigzagged, gables to the eye; a myriad of indentations and parapets, and machicolated eaves; most fantastic waterspouts; labelled windows, not a few of them painted glass; groups of right Elizabethan chimneys; balconies of divers fashions, greater and lesser; stones carved with heraldries innumerable, let in here and there in the wall; and a very noble projecting gateway—a facsimile, I am told, of that appertaining to a certain dilapidated royal palace, which long ago seems to have caught in a particular manner the Poet's fancy, as witness the stanza,

> Of all the palaces so fair,
> Built for the royal dwelling,
> In Scotland, far beyond compare,
> Linlithgow is excelling.[1]

[1] Marmion, Canto IV. Stanza 15.

From this porchway, which is spacious and airy, quite open to the elements in front, and adorned with some enormous petrified stag-horns overhead, you are admitted by a pair of folding-doors at once into the hall, and an imposing *coup d'œil* the first glimpse of the Poet's interior does present. The lofty windows, only two in number, being wholly covered with coats of arms, the place appears as dark as the twelfth century, on your first entrance from noonday; but the delicious coolness of the atmosphere is luxury enough for a minute or two; and by degrees your eyes get accustomed to the effect of those "storied panes," and you are satisfied that you stand in one of the most picturesque of apartments. The hall is about forty feet long by twenty in height and breadth. The walls are of richly carved oak, most part of it exceedingly dark, and brought, it seems, from the old Abbey of Dunfermline: the roof, a series of pointed arches of the same, each beam presenting in the centre a shield of arms richly blazoned: of these shields there are sixteen, enough to bear all the quarterings of a perfect pedigree if the Poet could show them; but on the maternal side (at the extremity) there are two or three blanks (of the same sort that made Louis le Grand unhappy) which have been covered with sketches of cloudland, and equipped with the appropriate motto, "*Nox alta velat.*" There is a door at the eastern end, over and round which the Baronet has placed another series of escutcheons; these are the memorials of his immediate personal connexions, the bearings of his friends and companions.[1] All around the cornice of this noble room there runs a continued series of blazoned shields of another sort still; at the centre of one end I saw the bloody heart of Douglas, and opposite to that the Royal Lion of Scotland,—and between the ribs there is an inscription in black letter, which I after some trials read. To the best of my recollection, the words are —"These be the Coat Armories of the Clannis and Chief Men of name wha keepit the marchys of Scotland in the aulde time for the Kinge. Trewe ware they in their tyme,

[1] The Arms of Morritt, Erskine, Rose, etc. etc. etc.

and in their defense God them defendit." There are from thirty to forty shields thus distinguished,—Douglas, Soulis, Buccleugh, Maxwell, Johnstoune, Glendoning, Herries, Rutherford, Kerr, Elliot, Pringle, Home, and all the other heroes of the Border Minstrelsy. The floor of this hall is black and white marble, from the Hebrides, wrought lozenge-wise; and the upper walls are completely hung with arms and armour. Two full suits of splendid steel occupy niches at the eastern end; the one an English suit of Henry the Fifth's time, the other an Italian, not quite so old. The variety of cuirasses, black and white, plain and sculptured, is endless; helmets are in equal profusion; stirrups and spurs, of every fantasy, dangle about and below them; and there are swords of every order, from the enormous two-handed weapon with which the Swiss peasants dared to withstand the spears of the Austrian chivalry, to the claymore of the "Forty-five," and the rapier of Dettingen. Indeed, I might come still lower; for, among other spoils, I saw Polish lances, gathered by the Author of Paul's Letters on the Field of Waterloo, and a complete suit of chain mail taken off the corpse of one of Tippoo's bodyguard at Seringapatam. A series of German executioners' swords was pointed out to me, on the blade of one of which are the arms of Augsburg, and a legend, which may be thus rendered,—

> Dust, when I strike, to dust: From sleepless grave,
> Sweet Jesu! stoop, a sin-stained soul to save.

'"Stepping westward" (as Wordsworth says) from this hall, you find yourself in a narrow, low-arched room, which runs quite across the house, having a blazoned window again at either extremity, and filled all over with smaller pieces of armour and weapons,—such as swords, firelocks, spears, arrows, darts, daggers, etc. etc. etc. Here are the pieces esteemed most precious by reason of their histories respectively. I saw, among the rest, Rob Roy's gun, with his initials R. M. C., *i.e.* Robert Macgregor Campbell, round the touch-hole; the blunderbuss of Hofer, a present to Sir Walter from his friend Sir Hum-

phrey Davy;[1] a magnificent sword, as magnificently mounted, the gift of Charles the First to the great Montrose; the hunting bottle of bonnie King Jamie; Buonaparte's pistols (found in his carriage at Waterloo, I believe), *cum multis aliis*. I should have mentioned that stag-horns and bulls' horns (the petrified relics of the old mountain monster, I mean), and so forth, are suspended in great abundance above all the doorways of these armouries; and that, in one corner, a dark one as it ought to be, there is a complete assortment of the old Scottish instruments of torture, not forgetting the thumbikins under which Cardinal Carstairs did *not* flinch, and the more terrific iron crown of Wishart the Martyr, being a sort of barred headpiece, screwed on the victim at the stake, to prevent him from crying aloud in his agony. In short, there can be no doubt that, like Grose of merry memory, the mighty minstrel

> has a fouth o' auld nicknackets:
> Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,
> Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
> A towmont guid.

These relics of other, and for the most part darker years, are disposed, however, with so much grace and elegance, that I doubt if Mr. Hope himself would find anything to quarrel with in the beautiful apartments which contain them. In the hall, when the weather is hot, the Baronet is accustomed to dine; and a gallant refectory no question it must make. A ponderous chandelier of painted glass swings from the roof; and the chimney-piece (the design copied from the stonework of the Abbot's Stall at Melrose) would hold rafters enough for a Christmas fire of the good old times. Were the company suitably attired, a dinner-party here would look like a scene in the Mysteries of Udolpho.

'Beyond the smaller, or rather I should say the narrower armoury, lies the dining-parlour proper, how-

[1] See the Life of Sir Humphrey Davy, by his Brother, vol. i. p. 506.

ever; and though there is nothing Udolphoish here, yet I can well believe that, when lighted up and the curtains down at night, the place may give no bad notion of the private snuggery of some lofty lord abbot of the time of the Canterbury Tales. The room is a handsome one, with a low and richly carved roof of dark oak again; a huge projecting bow-window, and the dais elevated *more majorum;* the ornaments of the roof, niches for lamps, etc. etc., in short, all the minor details, are, I believe, *facsimiles* after Melrose. The walls are hung in crimson, but almost entirely covered with pictures, of which the most remarkable are—the parliamentary general, Lord Essex, a full length on horseback; the Duke of Monmouth, by Lely; a capital Hogarth, by himself; Prior and Gay, both by Jervas; and the head of Mary Queen of Scots, in a charger, painted by *Amias Cawood* the day after the decapitation at Fotheringay, and sent some years ago as a present to Sir Walter from a Prussian nobleman, in whose family it had been for more than two centuries. It is a most death-like performance, and the countenance answers well enough to the coins of the unfortunate beauty, though not at all to any of the portraits I have happened to see. Among various family pictures, I noticed particularly Sir Walter's great-grandfather, the old cavalier mentioned in one of the epistles in Marmion, who let his beard grow after the execution of Charles the First. There is also a portrait of Lucy Walters, mother to the Duke of Monmouth; and another of Anne Duchess of Buccleugh, the same who,

> In pride of youth, in beauty's bloom,
> Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

Beyond and alongside are narrowish passages, which make one fancy one's self in the penetralia of some dim old monastery; for roofs and walls and windows (square, round, and oval alike) are sculptured in stone, after the richest relics of Melrose and Roslin Chapel. One of these leads to a charming breakfast-room, which looks to the Tweed on one side, and towards Yarrow and Ettrick,

famed in song, on the other: a cheerful room, fitted up with novels, romances, and poetry, at one end; and the other walls covered with a valuable and beautiful collection of water-colour drawings, chiefly by Turner, and Thomson of Duddingstone—the designs, in short, for the magnificent work entitled "Provincial Antiquities of Scotland." There is one good oil painting over the chimney-piece—Fast Castle by Thomson, *alias* the Wolf's Crag of the Bride of Lammermoor—and some large black and white drawings of the Vision of Don Roderick, by Sir James Steuart of Allanbank (whose illustrations of Marmion and Mazeppa you have seen or heard of), are at one end of the parlour. The room is crammed with queer cabinets and boxes, and in a niche there is a bust of old Henry Mackenzie, by Joseph of Edinburgh. Returning towards the armoury, you have, on one side of a most religious-looking corridor, a small green-house, with a fountain playing before it—the very fountain that in days of yore graced the cross of Edinburgh, and used to flow with claret at the coronation of the Stuarts—a pretty design, and a standing monument of the barbarity of modern innovation. From the small armoury you pass into the drawing-room, another handsome and spacious apartment, with antique ebony furniture and crimson silk hangings, cabinets, china, and mirrors *quantum suff.*, and some portraits; among the rest, Dryden, by Lely, with his grey hairs floating about in a most picturesque style, eyes full of wildness, presenting the old bard, I take it, in one of those "tremulous moods" in which we have it on record he appeared when interrupted in the midst of his Alexander's Feast. From this you pass into the largest of all these rooms, the library. It is an oblong of some fifty feet by thirty, with a projection in the centre, opposite the fire-place, terminating in a grand bow-window, fitted up with books also, and, in fact, constituting a sort of chapel to the church. The roof is of carved oak again—a very rich pattern—chiefly *à la* Roslin; and the bookcases, which are also of richly carved oak, reach high up the walls all round. The collection amounts, in this room, to some

fifteen or twenty thousand volumes, arranged according to their subjects: British history and antiquities filling the whole of the chief wall; English poetry and drama, classics and miscellanies, one end; foreign literature, chiefly French and German, the other. The cases on the side opposite the fire are wired, and locked, as containing articles very precious and very portable. One consists entirely of books and MSS. relating to the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and another (within the recesses of the bow-window) of treatises *de re magica*, both of these being (I am told, and can well believe), in their several ways, collections of the rarest curiosity. My cicerone pointed out in one corner a magnificent set of Mountfaucon, fifteen volumes folio, bound in the richest manner in scarlet, and stamped with the royal arms, the gift of King George IV. There are few living authors of whose works presentation copies are not to be found here. My friend showed me inscriptions of that sort in, I believe, every European dialect extant. The books are all in prime condition, and bindings that would satisfy Dr. Dibdin. The only picture is Sir Walter's eldest son, in hussar uniform, and holding his horse—by Allan of Edinburgh—a noble portrait, over the fireplace; and the only bust is that of Shakspeare, from the Avon monument, in a small niche in the centre of the east side. On a rich stand of porphyry, in one corner, reposes a tall silver urn, filled with bones from the Piræus, and bearing the inscription, "Given by George Gordon, Lord Byron, to Sir Walter Scott, Bart."

'Connected with this fine room, and fronting—which none of the other sitting-rooms do—to the south, is a smaller library, the *sanctum* of the Author. This room, which seems to be a crib of about twenty feet, contains, of what is properly called furniture, nothing but a small writing-table in the centre, a plain arm-chair covered with black leather—and a single chair besides; plain symptoms that this is no place for company. On either side of the fireplace there are shelves filled with books of reference, chiefly, of course, folios; but except these, there are no

books save the contents of a light gallery which runs round three sides of the room, and is reached by a hanging stair of carved oak in one corner. There are only two portraits—an original of the beautiful and melancholy head of Claverhouse (Bonny Dundee), and a small full-length of Rob Roy. Various little antique cabinets stand round about, each having a bust on it. Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims are over the mantelpiece; above them is a Highland target, with a star of claymores; and in one corner I saw a collection of really useful weapons—those of the forest-craft, to wit—axes and bills, and so forth, of every calibre.

'In one corner of the *sanctum* there is a little holy of holies, in the shape of a closet, which looks like the oratory of some dame of old romance and opens into the gardens; and the tower which furnishes this below, forms above a private staircase accessible from the gallery, and leading to the upper regions.

'The view to the Tweed from all the principal apartments is beautiful. You look out from among bowers over a lawn of sweet turf, upon the clearest of all streams, fringed with the wildest of birch woods, and backed with the green hills of Ettrick Forest.'

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CHAPTER LXIII

Excursion to Ireland—Reception in Dublin—Wicklow—Edgeworthstown—Killarney—Cork—Castle Blarney, etc.—Letters from Moore and Canning—Llangollen—Elleray—Storrs—Lowther.

1825

BEFORE the Court of Session rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his Sketch of the French Revolution; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway, of which we have his impressions in the Lighthouse Diary of 1814; his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively; and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons, who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English Library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized; and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as to literary men. He had not, therefore, formed the remotest anticipation of the kind of reception which awaited him in Dublin, and indeed throughout the island wherever he traversed it.

On the day after he dispatched the following letter, he had the satisfaction of seeing his son gazetted as Captain.

'*To Walter Scott, Esq., 15th Hussars, 10 Stephen's Green, Dublin.*

'EDINBURGH, *16th June* 1825.

'MY DEAR WALTER—I shall wait with some impatience for this night's Gazette. I have written to Coutts to pay the money so soon as you are in possession.

'On Saturday 11th, I went to Blair-Adam, and had a delicious stroll among the woods. The roe-deer are lying as thick there as in the Highlands, and, I daresay, they must be equally so at Lochore: so you will have some of the high game. They are endeavouring to destroy them, which they find very difficult. It is a pity they do so much mischief to the woods, for otherwise they are the most beautiful objects in nature; and were they at Abbotsford, I could not I think have the heart to make war on them. Two little fawns came into the room at tea-time and drank cream. They had the most beautiful dark eyes and little dark muzzles, and were scarce so big as Miss Fergusson's Italian greyhound. The Chief Commissioner offered them to me, but to keep them tame would have been impossible on account of the dogs, and to turn them loose would have been wilfully entailing risk on the plantations which have cost me so much money and trouble. There was then a talk of fattening them for the kitchen, a proposal which would have driven mamma distracted.

'We spent Monday on a visit to Lochore, and in planning the road which is so much wanted. The Chief Commissioner is an excellent manager, and has undertaken to treat with Mr. Wemyss of East Blair, through a part of whose property the line lies, but just at a corner, and where it will be as convenient for his property as Lochore.

'I am glad Jane looks after her own affairs. It is very irksome, to be sure; but then one must do it, or be eaten up by their servants, like Actæon by his hounds.

Talking of hounds, I have got a second Maida, but he is not yet arrived. Nimrod is his name.

'I keep my purpose as expressed in my last. I might, perhaps, persuade mamma to come, but she is unhappy in steamboats, bad beds, and all the other inconveniences of travelling. Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson, as I hear, are thinking of stirring towards you. I hope they will allow our visit to be over in the first instance, as it would overtax Jane and you—otherwise I should like to see the merry knight in Ireland, where I suppose he would prove *Ipsis Hibernis Hibernior*, more Irish than the natives.

'I have given Charles his choice between France and Ireland, and shall have his answer in two or three days. Will he be *de trop* if we can pack him up in the little barouche?

'Your commentary on Sir D. Dundas's confused hash of regulations, which, for the matter of principle, might be shortened to a dozen, puts me in mind of old Sir William Erskine's speech to him, when all was in utter confusion at the retreat from before Dunkirk, and Sir William came down to protect the rear. In passing Sir David, the tough old veteran exclaimed, "Davie, ye donnert idiot, where's a' your *peevioys* (pivots) the day?"

'As to your early hours, no man ought to be in bed at seven in summer time. I never am; your four o'clock is rather premature.—Yours, with kindest remembrances to Jane, WALTER SCOTT.

'*P.S.*—Yours just received, dateless as was your former. I suppose it is a family fault. What I have written will show that the cash matters are *bang-up*. A comparison of the dates will show there has been no voluntary delay on my part; indeed, what motive could I have for leaving money without interest in the hands of a London banker? But we are corresponding at a triangle, when you write to me and I to London. I will write to Jane to scold her for her ladylike fears about our reception: to find you happy will be the principal part of my

welcome; for the rest, a slice of plain meat of any kind —a cigar—and a little *potheen*, are worth turtle and burgundy to my taste. As for poor dear stupid ———, there is only one answer, which the clown in one of Shakspeare's plays says will be a fitting reply to *all* questions—*Oh Lord, sir!!!*'

It did not suit either Lady Scott or her eldest daughter to be of the Irish expedition; Anne Scott and myself accompanied Sir Walter. We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and after spending a few days among our friends in Lanarkshire, we embarked at Glasgow in a steamer for Belfast. Sir Walter kept no diary during this excursion, and the bustle and tumult throughout were such that he found time to write but very few letters. From my own to the ladies left at home, I could easily draw up a pretty exact journal of our proceedings; but I shall content myself with noting a few particulars more immediately connected with the person of Scott—for I am very sensible, on looking over what I set down at the moment, that there was hardly opportunity even for him to draw any conclusions of serious value on the structure and ordinary habits of society in Ireland, to say nothing of the vexed questions of politics and administration; and such features of natural beauty and historical interest as came under his view have been painted over and over again by native writers, with whom hasty observers should not be ambitious of competing.

The steamboat, besides a crowd of passengers of all possible classes, was lumbered with a cargo offensive enough to the eye and the nostrils, but still more disagreeable from the anticipations and reflections it could not fail to suggest. Hardly had our carriage been lashed on the deck before it disappeared from our view amidst mountainous packages of old clothes; the cast-off raiment of the Scotch beggars was on its way to a land where beggary is the staple of life. The captain assured us that he had navigated nearly forty years between the West of

Scotland and the sister island, and that his freights from the Clyde were very commonly of this description; pigs and potatoes being the usual return. Sir Walter rather irritated a military passenger (a stout old Highlander), by asking whether it had never occurred to him that the beautiful checkery of the clan tartans might have originated in a pious wish on the part of the Scottish Gael to imitate the tatters of the parent race. After soothing the veteran into good-humour, by some anecdotes of the Celtic splendours of August 1822, he remarked that if the Scotch Highlanders were really descended in the main from the Irish blood, it seemed to him the most curious and difficult problem in the world to account for the startling contrasts in so many points of their character, temper, and demeanour; and entered into some disquisition on this subject, which I am sorry I cannot repeat in detail. The sum of his opinion was, that while courage and generous enthusiasm of spirit, kindness of heart, and great strength and purity of domestic affection, characterised them equally, the destruction, in the course of endless feuds, and wars, and rebellions, of the native aristocracy of Ireland, had robbed that people of most of the elements of internal civilisation; and avowed his belief, that had the Highlanders been deprived, under similar circumstances, of their own chiefs, they would have sunk, from the natural poverty of their regions, into depths of barbarity not exampled even in the history of Ireland. The old soldier (who had taken an early opportunity of intimating his own near relationship to the chief of his sept) nodded assent, and strutted from our part of the deck with the dignity of a MacTurk.—'But then,' Sir Walter continued (watching the Colonel's retreat)—'but then comes the queerest point of all. How is it that our solemn, proud, dignified Celt, with a soul so alive to what is elevating and even elegant in poetry and feeling, is so supereminently dull as respects all the lighter play of fancy? The Highlander never understands wit or humour —Paddy, despite all his misery and privations, overflows with both. I suppose he is the gayest fellow in the

world, except the only worse-used one still, the West-India nigger. This is their make-up—but it is to me the saddest feature in the whole story.'

A voyage down the Firth of Clyde is enough to make anybody happy: nowhere can the home tourist, at all events, behold, in the course of one day, such a succession and variety of beautiful, romantic, and majestic scenery: on one hand, dark mountains and castellated shores—on the other, rich groves and pastures, interspersed with elegant villas and thriving towns—the bright estuary between, alive with shipping, and diversified with islands.

It may be supposed how delightful such a voyage was in a fine day of July, with Scott, always as full of glee on any trip as a schoolboy; crammed with all the traditions and legends of every place we passed; and too happy to pour them out for the entertainment of his companions on deck. After dinner, too, he was the charm of the table. A worthy old Bailie of Glasgow sat by him, and shared fully in the general pleasure; though his particular source of interest and satisfaction was, that he had got into such close quarters with a live Sheriff and Clerk of Session, and this gave him the opportunity of discussing sundry knotty points of police law, as to which our steerage passengers might perhaps have been more curious than most of those admitted to the symposium of the cabin. Sir Walter, however, was as ready for the rogueries of the Broomielaw as for the misty antiquities of Balclutha, or the discomfiture of the Norsemen at Largs, or Bruce's adventures in Arran. I remember how this new acquaintance chuckled when he, towards the conclusion of our first bowl of punch, said he was not surprised to find himself gathering much instruction from the Bailie's conversation on his favourite topics, since the most eminent and useful of the police magistrates of London (Colquhoun) had served his apprenticeship in the Town Chamber of Glasgow. The Bailie insisted for a second bowl, and volunteered to be the manufacturer; 'for,' quoth he (with a sly wink), 'I am reckoned a fair hand, though not equal to *my father, the deacon*.' Scott smiled in acquiescence, and, the ladies having by this time

withdrawn, said he was glad to find the celebrated beverage of the city of St. Mungo had not fallen into desuetude. The Bailie extolled the liquor he was brewing, and quoted Sir John Sinclair's Code of Health and Longevity for the case of a gentleman well known to himself, who lived till ninety, and had been drunk upon it every night for half a century. But Bailie * * * was a devout elder of the kirk, and did not tell his story without one or two groans that his doctrine should have such an example to plead. Sir Walter said, he could only hope that manners were mended in other respects since the days when a popular minister of the last age (one Mr. Thom), renowned for satirical humour, as well as for high-flying zeal, had demolished all his own chances of a Glasgow benefice, by preaching before the Town Council from this text in Hosea :—'Ephraim's drink is sour, and he hath committed whoredom continually.' The Bailie's brow darkened (like Nicol Jarvie's when they *misca'd Rab*); he groaned deeper than before, and said he feared 'Tham o' Govan was at heart a ne'er-do-weel.' He, however, refilled our glasses as he spoke; and Scott, as he tasted his, said, 'Weel, weel, Bailie, Ephraim was not so far wrong as to the matter of drink.' A gay little Irish Squireen (a keener Protestant even than our 'merchant and magistrate') did not seem to have discovered the Great Unknown until about this time, and now began to take a principal share in the conversation. To the bowl of Ephraim he had from the first done all justice. He broke at once into the heart of the debateable land; and after a few fierce tirades against Popery, asked the Highland Colonel, who had replaced the master of the steamer at the head of the table, to give *the glorious memory*. The prudent Colonel affected not to hear until this hint had been thrice repeated, watching carefully meanwhile the demeanour of a sufficiently mixed company. The general pushing in of glasses, and perhaps some freemasonry symptoms besides—(for we understood that he had often served in Ireland)—had satisfied him that all was right, and he rose and announced the Protestant Shibboleth with a voice that made the lockers and rafters

ring again. Bailie * * * rose with grim alacrity to join in the cheers; and then our Squireen proposed, in his own person, what, he said, always ought to be the second toast among good men and true. This was nothing else than *the heroic memory*, which, from our friend's preliminary speech, we understood to be the memory of *Oliver Cromwell*. Sir Walter winced more shrewdly than his Bailie had done about Ephraim's transgressions, but swallowed his punch, and stood up, glass in hand, like the rest, though an unfortunate fit of coughing prevented his taking part in their huzzas. This feature of Irish loyalism was new to the untravelled Scotch of the party. On a little reflection, however, we thought it not so unnatural. Our little Squireen boasted of being himself descended from a sergeant in Cromwell's army; and he added that 'the best in Ireland' had similar pedigrees to be proud of. He took care, however, to inform us that his own great ancestor was a real *jontleman* all over, and behaved as such; 'for,' said he, 'when Oliver gave him his order for the lands, he went to the widow, and tould her he would neither turn out her nor the best-looking of her daughters; so get the best dinner you can, old lady,' quoth he, 'and parade the whole lot of them, and I'll pick.' Which was done, it seems, accordingly; and probably no conquest ever wanted plenty of such alleviations.

When we got upon deck again after our carousal, we found it raining heavily, and the lady passengers in great misery; which state of things continued till we were within sight of Belfast. We got there about nine in the morning, and I find it set down that we paid four guineas for the conveyance of the carriage, and a guinea apiece for ourselves; in 1837, I understand the charge for passengers is not more than half-a-crown a head in the cabin, and sixpence in the steerage—so rapidly has steam-navigation extended in the space of twelve years. Sir Walter told us he well remembered being on board of the first steamer that ever was launched in Britain, in 1812. For some time, that one awkward machine went back and forward between Glasgow and Greenock, and it would have looked

like a cock-boat beside any one of the hundreds of magnificent steamships that now cover the Firth of Clyde. It is also written in my pocket-book that the little Orange Squireen was particularly kind and serviceable at our landing—knocking about the swarm of porters that invaded the vessel on anchoring in a style quite new to us, with slang equally Irish—*e.g.* 'Your fingers are all thumbs, I see—put that (portmanteau) in your teeth, you grampus,' etc. etc.

The following is part of the first letter I wrote to my wife from Dublin :—'Belfast is a thriving bustling place, surrounded with smart villas, and built much like a second-rate English town; yet there we saw the use of the imported rags forthwith. One man, apparently happy and gay, returning to his work (a mason seemingly), from breakfast, with pipe in mouth, had a coat of which I don't believe any three inches together were of the same colour or the same stuff—red, black, yellow, green—cloth, velveteen, corduroy, fustian—the complete image of a tattered coverlid originally made on purpose of particularly small patches—no shirt, and almost no breeches;—yet this is the best part of Ireland, and the best population. What shall we see in the South?

'Erin deserves undoubtedly the style of *Green Erin*. We passed through high and low country, rich and poor, but none that was not greener than Scotland ever saw. The husbandry to the north seemed rather careless than bad—I should say *slovenly*, for everything is cultivated, and the crops are fine, though the appearance is quite spoiled by the bad, or oftener the *no* fences; and, above all, to unaccustomed eyes, by the human wretchedness everywhere visible even there. Your papa says, however, that he sees all over the North, marks of an improving country; that the new houses are all greatly better than the old, etc. He is no doubt right as to the towns, and even villages on the highway, but I can't imagine the *newest* hut of the peasantry to have been preceded by worse even in the days of Malachi with the collar of gold. They are of clay without chimneys, and without any opening for

light, except the door and the smoke-hole in the roof. When there is a window, it seldom has even one pane of glass, and I take it the aperture is only a summer luxury, to be closed up with the ready trowel whenever the winter comes. The filth, darkness, and squalor of these dens and their inhabitants are beyond imagination, even to us who have traversed so often the wildest of our own Highland glens; yet your father swears he has not yet seen one face decidedly careworn and unhappy; on the contrary, an universal good-humour and merriment, and, to us, every sort of civility from the poor people; as yet few beggars. An old man at Dunleer having got some pence from Anne while the carriage stopped, an older woman came forward to sell gooseberries, and we declining these, she added that we might as well give her an alms too then, for she was an old *struggler*. Anne thought she said *smuggler*, and dreamt of potheen, but she meant that she had done her best to resist the "sea of troubles"; whereas her neighbour, the professed mendicant, had yielded to the stream too easily. The Unknown says he shall recollect the word, which deserves to be classical. We slept at Dundalk, a poor little town by the shore, but with a magnificent Justice-hall and jail—a public building superior, I think, to any in Edinburgh, in the midst of a place despicably dirty and miserable.'

When we halted at Drogheda, a retired officer of dragoons, discovering that the party was Sir Walter's, sent in his card, with a polite offer to attend him over the field of the battle of the Boyne, about two miles off, which of course was accepted;—Sir Walter rejoicing the veteran's heart by his vigorous recitation of the famous ballad (*The Crossing of the Water*), as we proceeded to the ground, and the eager and intelligent curiosity with which he received his explanations of it.

On Thursday the 14th we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St. Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe), the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an

easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him, as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which, wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding-feast.

That very evening arrived a deputation from the Royal Society of Dublin, inviting Sir Walter to a public dinner; and next morning he found on his breakfast-table a letter from the Provost of Trinity College (Dr. Kyle, now Bishop of Cork), announcing that the University desired to pay him the very high compliment of a degree of Doctor of Laws by *diploma*. The Archbishop of Dublin (the celebrated Dr. Magee), though surrounded with severe domestic afflictions at the time, was among the earliest of his visitors; another was the Attorney-General (now Lord Chancellor Plunkett); a third was the Commander of the Forces, Sir George Murray; and a fourth the Chief Remembrancer of Exchequer (the Right Honourable Anthony Blake), who was the bearer of a message from the Marquis Wellesley, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, offering all sorts of facilities, and inviting him to dine next day at his Excellency's country residence, Malahide Castle. It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his levee in St. Stephen's Green. The courts of law were not then sitting, and most of the judges were out of town; but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender every conceivable homage and hospitality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say truth, we had, no more than himself, counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society), than the demonstrations of respect which, after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognised at the

door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watchword was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtseying all the way down; while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot wheels of a conqueror. I had certainly been most thoroughly unprepared for finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military greatness. Sir Robert Peel says that Sir Walter's reception on the High Street of Edinburgh, in August 1822, was the first thing that gave him a notion of 'the electric shock of a nation's gratitude.' I doubt if even that scene surpassed what I myself witnessed when he returned down Dame Street, after inspecting the Castle of Dublin. Bailie * * * *, who had been in the crowd on that occasion, called afterwards in Stephen's Green to show Sir Walter some promised Return about his Glasgow Police, and observed to me, as he withdrew, that '*yon* was owre like worshipping the creature.'

I may as well, perhaps, extract from a letter of the 16th, the contemporary note of one day's operations. 'Sir Humphrey Davy is here on his way to fish in Connemara—he breakfasted at Walter's this morning; also Hartstonge, who was to show us the lions of St. Patrick's. Peveril was surprised to find the exterior of the cathedral so rudely worked, coarse, and almost shapeless—but the interior is imposing, and even grand. There are some curious old monuments of the Cork family, etc.; but one thinks of nothing but Swift there—the whole cathedral is merely his tomb. Your papa hung long over the famous inscription,[1] which is in gilt letters upon black marble; and seemed vexed there was not a ladder at hand that he might have got nearer the bust (apparently a very fine one), by Roubilliac, which is placed over it. This was given by the piety of his printer, Faulkener. According

[1] The terrible inscription is 'Hic depositum est corpus Jonathan Swift, S.T.P. etc., ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit.'

to this, Swift had a prodigious double chin; and Peveril remarked that the severity of the whole countenance is much increased by the absence of the wig, which, in the prints, conceals the height and gloom of the brow, the uncommon massiveness and breadth of the temple-bones, and the Herculean style in which the head fits in to the neck behind. Stella's epitaph is on the adjoining pillar—close by. Sir Walter seemed not to have thought of it before (or to have forgotten, if he had), but to judge merely from the wording that Swift himself wrote it. She is described as "Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of Stella, under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of this cathedral." "This," said Sir Walter, "the Dean might say—any one else would have said more." She died in 1727—Swift in 1745. Just by the entrance to the transept, is his tablet in honour of the servant who behaved so well about the secret of the Drapier's Letters. —We then saw St. Sepulchre's Library, a monastic-looking place, very like one of the smaller college libraries in Oxford. Here they have the folio Clarendon, with Swift's marginal remarks, mostly in pencil, but still quite legible. "Very savage as usual upon us poor Scots everywhere," quoth the Unknown. We then went into the Deanery (the one Swift inhabited has been pulled down), and had a most courteous and elegant reception from the Dean, the Honourable Dr. Ponsonby. He gave us a capital luncheon—the original full-length picture of *the* Dean over the sideboard. The print in the Edinburgh edition is very good—but the complexion is in the picture—black, robust, sanguine—a heavy-lidded, stern blue eye. It was interesting to see how completely the *genius loci* has kept his ground. Various little relics reverently hoarded as they should be. They said his memory was as fresh as ever among the common people about—they still sing his ballads, and had heard with great delight that Sir Walter wrote a grand book all about *the great Dane.* The

Jolly lads of St. Patrick's, St. Keven's, Donore,

mustered strong and stentorian at our exit. They would, like their great-grandfathers and mothers, have torn the Unknown to pieces, had he taken the other tack, and

Insulted us all by insulting the Dean.[1]

'We next saw the Bank—late Parliament House—the Dublin Society's Museum, where papa was enchanted with a perfect skeleton of the gigantic moose-deer, the horns fourteen feet from tip to tip, and high in proportion—and a long train of other fine places and queer things, all as per road-book. Everywhere throughout this busy day—fine folks within doors and rabble without—a terrible rushing and crushing to see the Baronet; Lord Wellington could not have excited a better rumpus. But the theatre in the evening completed the thing. I never heard such a row. The players might as well have had no tongues. Beatrice (Miss Foote) twice left the stage; and at last Benedick (Abbot, who is the manager) came forward, cunning dog, and asked what was the cause of the tempest. A thousand voices shouted, *Sir Walter Scott;* and the worthy lion being thus bearded and poked, rose, after an hour's torture, and said, with such a kindness and grace of tone and manner, *these* words:—"I am sure the Irish people—(a roar)—I am sure this respectable audience will not suppose that a stranger can be insensible to the kindness of their reception of him; and if I have been too long in saying this, I trust it will be attributed to the right cause—my unwillingness to take to myself honours so distinguished, and which I could not and cannot but feel to be unmerited." I think these are the very words. The noise continued—a perfect cataract and thunder of roaring; but he would take no hints about going to the stage-box, and the evening closed decently enough. The theatre is very handsome—the dresses and scenery capital—the actors and actresses seemed (but, to be sure, this was scarcely a fair specimen) about as bad as in the days of Croker's Familiar Epistles.'

On Monday the 18th, to give another extract—

[1] See Scott's Swift (Edit. 1814), vol. x. p. 537.

'Young Mr. Maturin breakfasted, and Sir Walter asked a great deal about his late father and the present situation of the family, and promised to go and see the widow. When the young gentleman was gone, Hartstonge told us that Maturin used to compose with a wafer pasted on his forehead, which was the signal that if any of his family entered the *sanctum* they must not speak to him. "He was never bred in a writer's *chaumer*," quoth Peveril. Sir Walter observed that it seemed to be a piece of Protestantism in Dublin to drop the saintly titles of the Catholic Church: they call St. Patrick's, Patrick's; and St. Stephen's Green has been Orangeized into Stephen's. He said you might trace the Puritans in the plain *Powles* (for St. Paul's) of the old English comedians. We then went to the Bank, where the Governor and Directors had begged him to let *themselves* show him everything in proper style; and he was forced to say, as he came out, "These people treated me as if I was a Prince of the Blood." I do believe that, just at this time, the Duke of York might be treated as well—better he could not be. From this to the College hard by. The Provost received Sir W. in a splendid drawing-room, and then carried him through the libraries, halls, etc. amidst a crowd of eager students. He received his diploma in due form, and there followed a superb *déjeûner* in the Provostry. Neither Oxford nor Cambridge could have done the whole thing in better style. Made acquaintance with Dr. Brinkley, Astronomer-Royal, and Dr. Macdonnell, Professor of Greek, and all the rest of the leading Professors, who vied with each other in respect and devotion to the Unknown.—19th. I forgot to say that there is one *true* paragraph in the papers. One of the College librarians yesterday told Sir W., fishingly, "I have been so busy that I have not yet read *your* Redgauntlet." He answered, very meekly, "I have not happened to fall in with such a work, Doctor."'

From Dublin we made an excursion of some days into the county Wicklow, halting for a night at the villa of the Surgeon-General, Mr. Crampton,[1] who struck Sir Walter

[1] Now Sir Philip Crampton, Baronet.—[1839.]

as being more like Sir Humphrey Davy than any man he had met, not in person only, but in the liveliness and range of his talk, and who kindly did the honours of Lough Breagh and the Dargle; and then for two or three at Old Connaught, Lord Plunkett's seat near Bray. Here there was a large and brilliant party assembled; and from hence, under the guidance of the Attorney-General and his amiable family, we perambulated to all possible advantage the classical resorts of the Devil's Glyn, Rosanna, Kilruddery, and Glendalough, with its seven churches, and *St. Kevin's Bed*—the scene of the fate of Cathleen, celebrated in Moore's ballad—

> 'By that lake whose gloomy shore
> Skylark never warbles o'er,' etc.

'It is,' says my letter, 'a hole in the sheer surface of the rock, in which two or three people might sit. The difficulty of getting into this place has been exaggerated, as also the danger, for it would only be falling thirty or forty feet into very deep water. Yet I never was more pained than when your papa, in spite of all remonstrances, would make his way to it, crawling along the precipice. He succeeded and got in—the first lame man that ever tried it. After he was gone, Mr. Plunkett told the female guide he was a poet. Cathleen treated this with indignation, as a quiz of Mr. Attorney's. "*Poet!*" said she, "the devil a bit of him—but an honourable gentleman: he gave me half-a-crown."'

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs. Scott, and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General, who had long been an intimate friend of the Edgeworth family, and equally gratified both the novelists by breaking the toils of his great practice to witness their meeting on his native soil. A happy meeting it was: we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious

countrywoman, and their appreciation of her guest; while her brother, Mr. Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favoured district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics,—the Protestant squire himself making it a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strengthen authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. Here, too, we pleased ourselves with recognising some of the sweetest features in Goldsmith's picture of

> Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;

and, in particular, we had 'the playful children just let loose from school' in perfection. Mr. Edgeworth's paternal heart delighted in letting them make a playground of his lawn; and every evening after dinner we saw leap-frog going on with the highest spirit within fifty yards of the drawing-room windows, while fathers and mothers, and their aged parents also, were grouped about among the trees watching the sport. It is a curious enough coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown; and Pallasmore (the *locus cui nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph), the little hamlet where the author of the Vicar of Wakefield first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths.

It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated, and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle, I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with pre-eminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those everyday duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit; one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and short-sighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of these powerful minds. I was then a young man, and I cannot forget how much I was struck at the time by some words that fell from one of them, when, in the course of a walk in the park at Edgeworthstown, I happened to use some phrase which conveyed (though not perhaps meant to do so) the impression that I suspected Poets and Novelists of being a good deal accustomed to look at life and the world only as materials for art. A soft and pensive shade came over Scott's face as he said—'I fear you have some very young ideas in your head:—are you not too apt to measure things by some reference to literature—to disbelieve that anybody can be worth much care who has no knowledge of that sort of thing, or taste for it? God help us! what a poor

world this would be if that were the true doctrine! I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but, I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart.' Maria did not listen to this without some water in her eyes—her tears are always ready when any generous string is touched—(for, as Pope says, 'the finest minds, like the finest metals, dissolve the easiest';)—but she brushed them gaily aside, and said, 'You see how it is—Dean Swift said he had written his books, in order that people might learn to treat him like a great lord. Sir Walter writes his, in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do.'

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which, later in his life, Sir Walter once gave in my hearing to his daughter Anne. She happened to say of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it—it was *vulgar*. 'My love,' said her father, 'you speak like a very young lady; do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar?* 'Tis only *common;* nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt; and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon.*'

At Edgeworthstown he received the following letter from Mr. Canning:—

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart, etc. etc.*

'COMBE WOOD, *July* 24, 1825.

'MY DEAR SIR—A pretty severe indisposition has prevented me from sooner acknowledging your kind letter; and now I fear that I shall not be able to accomplish my visit to Scotland this year. Although I shall be, for the last fortnight of August, at no great distance from the Borders, my time is so limited that I cannot reckon upon getting farther.

'I rejoice to see that my countrymen (for, though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an Irishman) have so well known the value of the honour which you are paying to them.

'By the way, if you landed at Liverpool on your return, could you find a better road to the north than through the Lake country? You would find me (from about the 10th of August) and Charles Ellis[1] at my friend Mr. Bolton's, on the Banks of Windermere, where I can promise you as kind, though not so noisy a welcome, as that which you have just experienced; and where our friend the Professor (who is Admiral of the Lake) would fit out all his flotilla, and fire as many of his guns as are not painted ones, in honour of your arrival.—Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely, GEO. CANNING.'

This invitation was not to be resisted; and the following letter announced a change of the original route:—

'*To John B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.*

'EDGEWORTHSTOWN, *Aug.* 3, 1825.

'Your kind letter, my dear Morritt, finds me sweltering under the hottest weather I ever experienced, for the sake of seeing sights—of itself, you know, the most feverish occupation in the world. Luckily we are free of Dublin, and there is nothing around us but green fields

[1] Now Lord Seaford.

and fine trees, "barring the high roads," which make those who tread on them the most complete *pie-poudreux* ever seen; that is, if the old definition of *pie-poudres* be authentic, and if not, you may seek another dusty simile for yourself—it cannot exceed the reality. I have with me Lockhart and Anne, Walter and his *cara sposa*, for all whom the hospitality of Edgeworthstown has found ample space and verge enough. Indeed it is impossible to conceive the extent of this virtue in all classes; I don't think even our Scottish hospitality can match that of Ireland. Everything seems to give way to the desire to accommodate a stranger; and I really believe the story of the Irish harper, who condemned his harp to the flames for want of firewood to cook a guest's supper. Their personal kindness to me has been so great, that were it not from the chilling recollection that novelty is easily substituted for merit, I should think, like the booby in Steele's play, that I had been *kept back*, and that there was something more about me than I had ever been led to suspect. As I am LL.D. of Trinity College, and am qualified as a Catholic seer, by having mounted up into the bed of Saint Kevin, at the celebrated seven churches of Glendalough, I am entitled to prescribe, *ex cathedra*, for all the diseases of Ireland, as being free both of the Catholic and Protestant parties. But the truth is, that Pat, while the doctors were consulting, has been gradually and securely recovering of himself. He is very loath to admit this, indeed; there being a strain of hypochondria in his complaints, which will not permit him to believe he's getting better. Nay, he gets even angry when a physician, more blunt than polite, continues to assure him that he is better than he supposes himself, and that much of his present distress consists, partly of the recollection of former indisposition, partly of the severe practice of modern empirics.

'In sober sadness, to talk of the misery of Ireland at this time, is to speak of the illness of a *malade imaginaire*. *Well* she is not, but she is rapidly becoming so. There are all the outward and visible tokens of convalescence.

Everything is mending; the houses that arise are better a hundredfold than the cabins that are falling; the peasants of the younger class are dressed a great deal better than with the rags which clothe the persons of the more ancient Teagues, which realize the wardrobe of Jenny Sutton, of whom Morris sweetly sings,

> One single pin at night let loose
> The robes which veiled her beauty.

I am sure I have seen with apprehension a single button perform the same feat, and when this mad scarecrow hath girded up his loins to run hastily by the side of the chaise, I have feared it would give way, and that there, as King Lear's fool says, we should be all shamed. But this, which seems once to have generally been the attire of the fair of the Green Isle, probably since the time of King Malachi and the collar of gold, is now fast disappearing, and the habit of the more youthful Pats and Patesses is decent and comely. *Here* they all look well coloured, and well fed, and well contented. And as I see in most places great exertions making to reclaim bogs upon a large scale, and generally to improve ground, I must needs hold that they are in constant employment.

'With all this, there is much that remains to be amended, and which time and increase of capital only can amend. The price of labour is far too low, and this naturally reduces the labouring poor beyond their just level in society. The behaviour of the gentry in general to the labourers is systematically harsh, and this arrogance is received with a servile deference which argues anything excepting affection. This, however, is also in the course of amending. I have heard a great deal of the far-famed Catholic Question from both sides, and I think I see its bearings better than I did; but these are for your ear when we meet—as meet we shall—if no accident prevent it. I return *via* Holyhead, as I wish to show Anne something of England, and you may believe that we shall take Rokeby in our way. To-morrow I go to Killarney, which will occupy most part of the week. About Satur-

day I shall be back at Dublin to take leave of friends; and then for England, ho! I will, avoiding London, seek a pleasant route to Rokeby. Fate will only allow us to rest there for a day or two, because I have some desire to see Canning, who is to be on the Lakes about that time. *Et finis*,—my leave will be exhausted. Anne and Lockhart send kindest compliments to you and the ladies. I am truly rejoiced that Mrs. John Morritt is better. Indeed, I had learned that agreeable intelligence from Lady Louisa Stuart. I found Walter and his wife living happily and rationally, affectionately and prudently. There is great good sense and quietness about all Jane's domestic arrangements, and she plays the leaguer's lady very prettily.—I will write again when I reach Britain, and remain ever yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William, were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels. We had lingered a week at Edgeworthstown, and were now anxious to make the best of our way towards the Lakes of Killarney; but posting was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected—and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and several of Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route—of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale; for, on reaching our next halting-place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, ere we started in the morning, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half-a-dozen bottles of champaign. But most of these houses seemed, like the Judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of the Peri Banou's tent. They seemed all to have room not only for the lion and lioness, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighbourhood

who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time.

It was a succession of festive gaiety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, churches, and ruins of all sorts—with more than enough of mountain, wood, lake, and river, to have made any similar progress in any other part of Europe, truly delightful in all respects. But those of the party to whom the South of Ireland was new, had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm. Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect; and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on. But, ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake. The constant passings and repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service;—the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every wayside, and blocked up every village where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation, such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive; and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes, had nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of Old Rome and Athens. It is painful enough even to remember such things; but twelve years can have made but a trifling change in the appearance of a country which, so richly endowed by Providence with every element of wealth and happiness, could, at so advanced a period of European civilisation, sicken the heart

of the stranger by such widespread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of absenteeism; and I fear it is not likely that any contemporary critic will venture to call my melancholy picture overcharged. A few blessed exceptions—such an aspect of ease and decency, for example, as we met everywhere on the vast domain of the Duke of Devonshire—served only to make the sad reality of the rule more flagrant and appalling. Taking his bedroom candle, one night in a village on the Duke's estate, Sir Walter summed up the strain of his discourse by a line of Shakspeare's—

> Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

There were, however, abundance of ludicrous incidents to break this gloom; and no traveller ever tasted either the humours or the blunders of Paddy more heartily than did Sir Walter. I find recorded in one letter a very merry morning at Limerick, where, amidst the ringing of all the bells, in honour of the advent, there was ushered in a brother-poet, who must needs pay his personal respects to the author of Marmion. He was a scarecrow figure—attired much in the fashion of the *strugglers*—by name O'Kelly; and he had produced on the spur of the occasion this modest parody of Dryden's famous epigram:—

> Three poets, of three different nations born,
> The United Kingdom in this age adorn;
> Byron of England, Scott of Scotia's blood,
> And Erin's pride—O'Kelly, great and good.

Sir Walter's five shillings were at once forthcoming; and the bard, in order that Miss Edgeworth might display equal generosity, pointed out, in a little volume of his works (for which, moreover, we had all to subscribe), this pregnant couplet—

> Scott, Morgan, Edgeworth, Byron, prop of Greece,
> Are characters whose fame not soon will cease.

We were still more amused (though there was real

misery in the case) with what befell on our approach to a certain pretty seat, in a different county, where there was a collection of pictures and curiosities not usually shown to travellers. A gentleman, whom we had met in Dublin, had been accompanying us part of the day's journey, and volunteered, being acquainted with the owner, to procure us easy admission. At the entrance of the domain, to which we proceeded under his wing, we were startled by the dolorous apparition of two undertaker's men, in voluminous black scarfs, though there was little or nothing of black about the rest of their habiliments, who sat upon the highway before the gate, with a whisky-bottle on a deal-table between them. They informed us that the master of the house had died the day before, and that they were to keep watch and ward in this style until the funeral, inviting all Christian passengers to drink a glass to his repose. Our Cicerone left his card for the widow—having previously, no doubt, written on it the names of his two lions. Shortly after we regained our post-house, he received a polite answer from the lady. To the best of my memory, it was in these terms :—

'Mrs. —— presents her kind compliments to Mr. ——, and much regrets that she cannot show the pictures to-day, as Major —— died yesterday evening by apoplexy; which Mrs. —— the more regrets, as it will prevent her having the honour to see Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth.'

Sir Walter said it reminded him of a woman in Fife, who, summing up the misfortunes of a black year in her history said—'Let me see, sirs; first, we lost our wee callant—and then Jenny—and then the gudeman himsel died—and then the *coo* died too, poor hizzey; but, to be sure, *her* hide brought me fifteen shillings.'

At one county gentleman's table where we dined, though two grand full-length daubs of William and Mary adorned the walls of the room, there was a mixed company—about as many Catholics as Protestants, all apparently on cordial terms, and pledging each other lustily in bumpers of capital claret. About an hour after dinner,

however, punch was called for ; tumblers and jugs of hot water appeared, and with them two magnums of whisky—the one bearing on its label KING'S, the other QUEEN'S. We did not at first understand these inscriptions ; but it was explained, *sotto voce*, that the King's had paid the duty, the Queen's was of contraband origin ; and, in the choice of the liquors, we detected a new shibboleth of party. The jolly Protestants to a man stuck to the King's bottle —the equally radiant Papists paid their duty to the Queen's.

Since I have alluded at all to the then grand dispute, I may mention, that, after our tour was concluded, we considered with some wonder that, having partaken liberally of Catholic hospitality, and encountered almost every other class of society, we had not sat at meat with one specimen of the Romish priesthood ; whereas, even at Popish tables, we had met dignitaries of the Established Church. This circumstance we set down at the time as amounting pretty nearly to a proof that there were few gentlemen in that order ; but we afterwards were willing to suspect that a prejudice of their own had been the source of it. The only incivility, which Sir Walter Scott ultimately discovered himself to have encountered—(for his friends did not allow him to hear of it at the time)—in the course of his Irish peregrination, was the refusal of a Roman Catholic gentleman, named O'Connell, who kept stag-hounds near Killarney, to allow of a hunt on the upper lake, the day he visited that beautiful scenery. This he did, as we were told, because he considered it as a notorious fact that Sir Walter Scott was an enemy to the Roman Catholic claims for admission to seats in Parliament. He was entirely mistaken, however ; for, though no man disapproved of Romanism as a system of faith and practice more sincerely than Sir Walter always did, he had long before this period formed the opinion that no good could come of farther resistance to the claim in question. He on all occasions expressed manfully his belief that the best thing for Ireland would have been never to relax the strictly *political* enactments of the penal

laws, however harsh these might appear. Had they been kept in vigour for another half-century, it was his conviction that Popery would have been all but extinguished in Ireland. But he thought that, after admitting Romanists to the elective franchise, it was a vain notion that they could be permanently or advantageously debarred from using that franchise in favour of those of their own persuasion. The greater part of the charming society into which he fell while in Ireland, entertained views and sentiments very likely to confirm these impressions; and it struck me that considerable pains were taken to enforce them. It was felt, probably, that the crisis of decision drew near; and there might be a natural anxiety to secure the suffrage of the great writer of the time. The polished amenity of the Lord-Lieutenant set off his commanding range of thought and dexterous exposition of facts to the most captivating advantage. 'The Marquis's talk,' says Scott, in a letter of the following year, 'gave me the notion of the kind of statesmanship that one might have expected in a Roman emperor, accustomed to keep the whole world in his view, and to divide his hours between ministers like Mecænas and wits like Horace.' The acute logic and brilliant eloquence of Lord Plunkett he ever afterwards talked of with high admiration; nor had he, he said, encountered in society any combination of qualities more remarkable than the deep sagacity and the broad rich humour of Mr. Blake. In Plunkett, Blake, and Crampton, he considered himself as having gained three real friends by this expedition; and I think I may venture to say, that the feeling on their side was warmly reciprocal.

If he had been made aware at the time of the discourtesy of the Romish stag-hunter at Killarney, he might have been consoled by a letter which reached him that same week from a less bigoted member of the same church—the great poet of Ireland—whom he had never chanced to meet in society but once, and that at an early period of life, shortly after the first publication of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart. etc. etc.*

'SLOPERTON COTTAGE, DEVIZES, *July* 24, 1825.

'MY DEAR SIR WALTER—I wish most heartily that I had been in my own green land to welcome you. It delights me, however, to see (what I could not have doubted) that the warm hearts of my countrymen have shown that they know how to value you. How I envy those who will have the glory of showing you and Killarney to each other! No two of nature's productions, I *will* say, were ever more worthy of meeting. If the Kenmares should be your Ciceroni, pray tell them what I say of their Paradise, with my best regards and greetings. I received your kind message, through Newton,[1] last year, that "if I did not come and see you, before you died, you would appear to me afterwards." Be assured that, as I am all for living apparitions, I shall take care and have the start of you, and would have done it this very year, I rather think, only for your Irish movements.

'Present my best regards to your son-in-law, and believe me, my dear Sir Walter (though we have met, I am sorry to say, but once in our lives),—yours cordially and sincerely, THOMAS MOORE.'

Scott's answer was—

'*To Thomas Moore, Esq.*

'*August* 5, SOMERTON, near TEMPLETON (I think).

'MY DEAR SIR—If anything could have added to the pleasure I must necessarily feel at the warm reception which the Irish nation have honoured me with, or if anything could abate my own sense that I am noways worth the coil that has been made about me, it must be the assurance that you partake and approve of the feelings of your kind-hearted countryfolks.

[1] The late amiable and elegant artist, Gilbert Stewart Newton, R.A., had spent part of the autumn of 1824 at Chiefswood.

'In Ireland I have met with everything that was kind, and have seen much which is never to be forgotten. What I have seen has, in general, given me great pleasure; for it appears to me that the adverse circumstances which have so long withered the prosperity of this rich and powerful country are losing their force, and that a gradual but steady spirit of progressive improvement is effectually, though tacitly, counteracting their bad effects. The next twenty-five years will probably be the most important in their results that Ireland ever knew. So prophesies a sharp-sighted Sennachie from the land of mist and snow, aware that, though his opinion may be unfounded, he cannot please your ear better than by presaging the prosperity of Ireland.

'And so, to descend from such high matters, I hope you will consider me as having left my card for you by this visit, although I have not been happy enough to find you at home. You are bound by the ordinary forms of society to return the call, and come to see Scotland. Bring wife and bairns. We have plenty of room, and plenty of oatmeal, and, *entre nous*, a bottle or two of good claret, to which I think you have as little objection as I have. We will talk of poor Byron, who was dear to us both, and regret that such a rose should have fallen from the chaplet of his country so untimely. I very often think of him almost with tears. Surely you, who have the means, should do something for his literary life at least. You might easily avoid tearing open old wounds. Then, returning to our proposed meeting, you know folks call me a Jacobite, and you a Jacobin; so it is quite clear that we agree to a T. Having uttered this vile pun, which is only pardonable because the subject of politics deserves no better, it is high time to conclude.

'I return through England, yet, I am afraid, with little chance of seeing you, which I should wish to do, were it but for half an hour. I have come thus far on my way to Killarney, where Hallam is lying with a broken leg. So much for middle-aged gentlemen climbing precipices. I, who have been regularly inducted into

the bed of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches, trust I shall bear charmed limbs upon this occasion.—I am very much, dear sir, your obliged and faithful

'WALTER SCOTT.'

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception—corporation honours, deputations of the literary and scientific societies, and so forth—awaited him, he gave a couple of days to the hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Lee; not forgetting an excursion to the groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful picnic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney stone*, one salute of which is said to emancipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte:*

> The stone this is, whoever kisses,
> He never misses to grow eloquent—
> 'Tis he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
> Or be a member of Parliament.

But the shamefacedness of our young female friends was not exposed to an inspection of the works of art, celebrated by the poetical Dean of Cork as the prime ornaments of Lady Jefferies's 'station'—

> The statues growing that noble place in,
> Of heathen goddesses most rare—
> Homer, Venus, and Nebuchadnezzar,
> All standing naked in the open air.

These had disappeared, and the castle and all its appurtenances were in a state of woeful dilapidation and neglect.

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holycross—at all of which places we were bountifully entertained, and assiduously ciceroned—to our old quarters in St. Stephen's Green; and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again,

Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time; and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed 'ladies' of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their way; and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing, to add one more to the long list of the illustrious visitors of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation.

An extract from a gossiping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen.

'ELLERAY, *August* 24.

* * * 'We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Carig, which Sir W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crags; a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streams like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated "Ladies"—viz. Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, forswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honoured virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neigh-

bourhood; for their elopement from Ireland had been performed under suspicious circumstances; and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had condescended to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance.[1] We proceeded up the hill, and found everything about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women, one apparently seventy, the other sixty-five, dressed in heavy blue riding-habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, etc., and Lady Eleanor positively *orders*—several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon, exactly like a K.C.B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The elder lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed; the other, the *ci-devant* groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, bijouterie, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue—the whole house outside and in (for we must see everything to the dressing-closets), *covered* with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it—and the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know who MacIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance (*i.e.* absurd innocence of character) one must have looked for; but

[1] It is, I suppose, needless to say, that the editor is far from vouching for the accuracy of these details. The letter in the text gives the gossip as it was heard at the time.

it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII. and George IV., down to magazine poets and quack-doctors, are a museum. I shall never see the spirit of blue-stockingism again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls; they have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them.'

This letter was written on the banks of Windermere, where we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr. Wilson, and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she is now.

Mr. Bolton's seat, to which Canning had invited Scott, is situated a couple of miles lower down on the same Lake; and thither Mr. Wilson conducted him next day. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the Minister—it included already Mr. Wordsworth. It has not, I suppose, often happened to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honoured and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was 'high discourse,' intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the

scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moonlight; and the last day 'the Admiral of the Lake' presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting the festive circle of Storrs, we visited the family of the late Bishop Watson at Calgarth, and Mr. Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal. He accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr. Southey in his unrivalled library. Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ullswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr. Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his lifelong friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons, who, like them, lavished all possible attentions and demonstrations of respect upon Sir Walter. He remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the 'fair domain' which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. But the temptations of Storrs and Lowther had cost more time than had been calculated upon, and the promised visit to Rokeby was unwillingly abandoned. Sir Walter reached Abbotsford again on the 1st of September, and said truly that 'his tour had been one ovation.'

I add two letters on the subject of this Irish expedition:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park, Greta Bridge.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Sept.* 2, 1825.

'Your letter, my dear Morritt, gave me most sincere pleasure on your account, and also on my own, as it reconciled me to myself for my stupidity in misdirecting my letters to Charlotte and you from Wales. I was sincerely vexed when I found out my *bevue*, but am now well pleased that it happened, since we might otherwise have arrived at Rokeby at a time when we must necessarily have been a little in the way. I wish you joy most sincerely of your nephew's settling in life, in a manner so agreeably to your wishes and views. *Bella gerant alii*—he will have seen enough of the world abroad to qualify him fully to estimate and discharge the duties of an English country-gentleman; and with your example before him, and your advice to resort to, he cannot, with the talents he possesses, fail to fill honourably that most honourable and important rank in society. You will probably, in due time, think of Parliament for him, where there is a fine sphere for young men of talents at present, all the old political post-horses being, as Sir Pertinax says, dry-foundered.

'I was extremely sorry to find Canning at Windermere looking poorly; but, in a ride, the old man seemed to come alive again. I fear he works himself too hard, under the great error of trying to do too much with his own hand, and to see everything with his own eyes, whereas the greatest general and the first statesman must, in many cases, be content to use the eyes and fingers of others, and hold themselves contented with the exercise of the greatest care in the choice of implements. His is a valuable life to us just now. I passed a couple of days at Lowther, to make up in some degree to Anne for her disappointment in not getting to Rokeby. I was seduced there by Lady Frederick Bentinck, whom I had long known as a very agreeable person, and who was very kind to Anne. This wore out my proposed leisure; and from Lowther we reached Abbotsford in one day, and now doth the old *bore*

feed in the old frank.[1] I had the great pleasure of leaving Walter and his little wife well, happy, and, as they seem perfectly to understand each other, likely to continue so. His ardour for military affairs continues unabated, and his great scene of activity is the *fifteen acres*—so the Irish denominate the exercising ground, consisting of about fifty acres, in the Phœnix Park, which induced an attorney, writing a challenge to a brother of the trade, to name, as a place of meeting, the *fifteen acres*, adding, with professional accuracy, "be they more or less." Here, about 3000 men, the garrison of Dublin, are to be seen exercising, ever and anon, in order that Pat may be aware how some 2400 muskets, assisted by the discharge of twenty field-pieces, and the tramp of 500 or 600 horse, sound in comparison to the thunder of Mr. O'Connell.

'All this travelling and wooing is like to prevent our meeting this season. I hope to make up for it the next. Lady Scott, Anne, and Sophia join Lockhart and me in best wishes to the happy two who are to be soon one. My best respects attend the Miss Morritts,—and I ever am, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *October* 12, 1825.

'It did not require your kind letter of undeserved remembrance, my dear friend, to remind me that I had been guilty of very criminal negligence in our epistolary correspondence. How this has come to pass I really do not know; but it arises out of any source but that of ingratitude to my friends, or thoughtless forgetfulness of my duty to them. On the contrary, I think always most of them to whom I do owe letters, for when my conscience is satisfied on that subject, their perturbed spirits remain at rest, or at least do not haunt me as the injured spirits do the surviving murderers.

'I well intended to have written from Ireland, but, alas! Hell, as some stern old divine says, is paved with

[1] 2nd King Henry IV. Act II. Scene 3.

good intentions. There was such a whirl of visiting, and laking, and boating, and wondering, and shouting, and laughing, and carousing; so much to be seen and so little time to see it; so much to be heard, and only two ears to listen to twenty voices, that, upon the whole, I grew desperate, and gave up all thoughts of doing what was right and proper upon post-days—and so all my epistolary good intentions are gone to Macadamize, I suppose, "the burning marle" of the infernal regions. I have not the pen of our friend Maria Edgeworth, who writes all the while she laughs, talks, eats, and drinks, and I believe, though I do not pretend to be so far in the secret, all the time she sleeps too. She has good luck in having a pen which walks at once so unweariedly and so well. I do not, however, quite like her last book on Education, considered as a general work. She should have limited the title to Education in Natural Philosophy, or some such term, for there is no great use in teaching children in general to roof houses or build bridges, which, after all, a carpenter or a mason does a great deal better at 2s. 6d. per day. In a waste country, like some parts of America, it may do very well, or perhaps for a sailor or a traveller, certainly for a civil engineer. But in the ordinary professions of the better-informed orders I have always observed, that a small taste for mechanics tends to encouraging a sort of trifling self-conceit, founded on knowing that which is not worth being known by one who has other matters to employ his mind on, and, in short, forms a trumpery gimcrack kind of a character, who is a mechanic among gentlemen, and most probably a gentleman among mechanics. You must understand I mean only to challenge the system as making mechanics too much and too general a subject of education, and converting scholars into makers of toys. Men like Watt, or whose genius tends strongly to invent and execute those wonderful combinations which extend in such an incalculable degree the human force and command over the physical world, do not come within ordinary rules; but your ordinary Harry should be kept to his grammar,

and your Lucy of most common occurrence will be best employed on her sampler, instead of wasting wood, and cutting their fingers, which I am convinced they did, though their historian says nothing of it.

'Well, but I did not mean to say anything about Harry and Lucy, whose dialogues are very interesting after all, but about Ireland, which I could prophesy for as well as if I were Thomas the Rhymer. Her natural gifts are so great, that, despite all the disadvantages which have hitherto retarded her progress, she will, I believe, be queen of the trefoil of kingdoms. I never saw a richer country, or, to speak my mind, a finer people; the worst of them is the bitter and envenomed dislike which they have to each other. Their factions have been so long envenomed, and they have such narrow ground to do their battle in, that they are like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead. This, however, is getting better, for as the government temporizes between the parties, and does not throw, as formerly, its whole weight into the Protestant scale, there is more appearance of things settling into concord and good order. The Protestants of the old school, the determined Orangemen, are a very fine race, but dangerous for the quiet of a country; they reminded me of the Spaniard in Mexico, and seemed still to walk among the Catholics with all the pride of the conquerors of the Boyne and the captors of Limerick. Their own belief is completely fixed, that there are enough of men in Down and Antrim to conquer all Ireland again; and when one considers the habitual authority they have exercised, their energetic and military character, and the singular way in which they are banded and united together, they may be right enough for what I know, for they have all one mind and one way of pursuing it. But the Catholic is holding up his head now in a different way from what they did in former days, though still with a touch of the savage about them. It is, after all, a helpless sort of superstition, which with its saints' days, and the influence of its ignorant bigoted priesthood, destroys ambition and industrious

exertion. It is rare to see the Catholic rise above the line he is born in. The Protestant part of the country is as highly improved as many parts of England. Education is much more frequent in Ireland than England. In Kerry, one of the wildest counties, you find peasants who speak Latin. It is not the art of reading, however, but the use which is made of it, that is to be considered. It is much to be wished that the priests themselves were better educated, but the College at Maynooth has been a failure. The students, all men of the lower orders, are educated there in all the bigotry of the Catholic religion, unmitigated by any of the knowledge of the world which they used to acquire in France, Italy, or Spain, from which they returned very often highly accomplished and companionable men. I do not believe either party care a bit for what is called Emancipation, only that the Catholics desire it because the Protestants are not willing they should have it, and the Protestants desire to withhold it because the want of it mortifies the Catholic. The best-informed Catholics said it had no interest for the common people, whose distresses had nothing to do with political Emancipation, but that they, the higher order, were interested in it as a point of honour, the withholding of which prevented their throwing their strength into the hands of Government. On the whole, I think Government have given the Catholics so much, that withholding this is just giving them something to grumble about, without its operating to diminish, in a single instance, the extent of Popery.— Then we had beautiful lakes, "those vast inland seas," as Spenser terms them, and hills which they call mountains, and dargles and dingles, and most superb ruins of castles and abbeys, and live nuns in strict retreat, not permitted to speak, but who read their breviaries with one eye, and looked at their visitors with the other. Then we had Miss Edgeworth, and the kind-natured clever Harriet, who moved, and thought, and acted for everybody's comfort rather than her own; we had Lockhart to say clever things, and Walter, with his whiskers, to overawe

obstinate postilions and impudent beggars—and Jane to bless herself that the folks had neither houses, clothes, nor furniture—and Anne to make fun from morning to night—

And merry folks were we.

'John Richardson has been looking at a wild domain within five miles of us, and left us in the earnest determination to buy it, having caught a basket of trouts in the space of two hours in the stream he is to call his own. It is a good purchase, I think; he has promised to see me again and carry you up a bottle of whisky, which, if you will but take enough of, will operate as a peace-offering should, and make you forget all my epistolary failures. I beg kind respects to dear Mrs. Agnes and to Mrs. Baillie. Lady Scott and Anne send best respects.—I have but room to say that I am always yours,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

CHAPTER LXIV

Life of Napoleon in progress—Visits of Mr. Moore, Mrs. Coutts, etc.—Commercial Mania and impending Difficulties.

1825

WITHOUT an hour's delay Sir Walter resumed his usual habits of life at Abbotsford—the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine; the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers—or the hoisting of the telegraph flag that called laird and bonnet-laird to the burning of the water, or the wassail of the hall. The hours of the closet alone had found a change. The preparation for the Life of Napoleon was a course of such hard reading as had not been called for while 'the great magician,' in the full sunshine of ease, amused himself, and delighted the world, by unrolling, fold after fold, his endlessly varied panorama of romance. That miracle had to all appearance cost him no effort. Unmoved and serene among the multiplicities of worldly business, and the invasions of half Europe and America, he had gone on tranquilly, enjoying rather than exerting his genius, in the production of those masterpieces which have peopled all our firesides with inexpensive friends, and rendered the solitary supremacy of Shakspeare, as an all-comprehensive and genial painter of man, no longer a proverb.

He had, while this was the occupation of his few desk-hours, read only for his diversion. How much he read even then, his correspondence may have afforded some notion. Those who observed him the most constantly, were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up to the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring, may easily be guessed; but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim, *never to be doing nothing*. He had no 'unconsidered trifles' of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for everything—except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours nowadays, with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the Reviews and Magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little.

He had now to apply himself doggedly to the mastering of a huge accumulation of historical materials. He read, and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum; but rose from such employment, not radiant and buoyant, as after he had been feasting himself among the teeming harvests of Fancy, but with an aching brow, and eyes on which the dimness of years had begun to plant some specks, before they were subjected again to that straining over small print and difficult manuscript which had, no doubt, been familiar to them in the early time, when (in Shortreed's phrase) 'he was making himself.' It was a pleasant sight when one happened to take a passing peep into his den, to see the white head erect, and the smile of conscious inspiration on his lips, while the pen, held boldly and at a commanding distance, glanced steadily and gaily along a fast-blackening page of 'The Talisman.' It now often made me sorry to catch a glimpse of him, stooping and

poring with his spectacles, amidst piles of authorities, a little note-book ready in the left hand, that had always used to be at liberty for patting Maida. To observe this was the more painful, because I had at that time to consult him about some literary proposals, the closing with which would render it necessary for me to abandon my profession and residence in Edinburgh, and with them the hope of being able to relieve him of some part of the minor labours in which he was now involved—an assistance on which he had counted when he undertook this historical task. There were then about me, indeed, cares and anxieties of various sorts, that might have thrown a shade even over a brighter vision of his interior. For the circumstance that finally determined me, and reconciled him as to the proposed alteration in my views of life, was the failing health of an infant equally dear to us both. It was, in a word, the opinion of our medical friends that the short-lived child of many and high hopes, whose name will go down to posterity with one of Sir Walter's most precious works, could hardly survive another northern winter; and we all flattered ourselves with the anticipation that my removal to London at the close of 1825 might pave the way for a happy resumption of the cottage at Chiefswood in the ensuing summer. *Dis aliter visum.*

During the latter months of 1825, while the matter to which I have alluded was yet undecided, I had to make two hurried journeys to London, by which I lost the opportunity of witnessing Sir Walter's reception of several eminent persons with whom he then formed or ratified a friendship;—among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord Gifford, and his Lady—who spent some days at Abbotsford, and detected nothing of the less agreeable features in its existence, which I have been dwelling upon; Dr. Philpotts, now Bishop of Exeter; and also the brother bard, who had expressed his regret at not being present 'when Scott and Killarney were introduced to each other.' No more welcome announcement ever reached Scott than Mr. Moore's of his purpose to make out, that same season, his long

meditated expedition to Scotland; and the characteristic opening and close of the reply will not, I hope, be thrown away upon my reader, any more than they were on the warm-hearted minstrel of Erin.

'*To Thomas Moore, Esq., Sloperton Cottage, Devizes.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *Thursday.*

'MY DEAR SIR,—DAMN SIR—MY DEAR MOORE—Few things could give me more pleasure than your realizing the prospect your letter holds out to me. We are at Abbotsford fixtures till 10th November, when my official duty, for I am "slave to an hour and vassal to a bell,"[1] calls me to Edinburgh. I hope you will give me as much of your time as you can—no one will value it more highly.

'You keep the great north road till you come to the last stage in England, Cornhill, and then take up the Tweed to Kelso. If I knew what day you would be at Kelso, I would come down and do the honours of Tweed-side, by bringing you here, and showing you anything that is remarkable by the way; but though I could start at a moment's warning, I should scarce, I fear, have time to receive a note from Newcastle soon enough to admit of my reaching you at Kelso. Drop me a line, however, at all events; and, in coming from Kelso to Melrose and Abbotsford, be sure to keep the southern side of the Tweed, both because it is far the pleasantest route, and because I will come a few miles to take the chance of meeting you. You do not mention whether you have any fellow-travellers. We have plenty of accommodation for any part of your family, or any friend, who may be with you.—Yours, in great joy and expectation,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

Mr. Moore arrived accordingly—and he remained several days. Though not, I believe, a regular journalizer, he kept a brief diary during his Scotch tour, and he has

[1] Oldham's Satires—See Scott's Dryden, vol. xi. p. 101.

kindly allowed me the use of it. He fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose—no one with him at Abbotsford but Lady and Miss Scott—and no company at dinner except the Fergussons and Laidlaw. The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation; and from the hour they met, they seemed to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honourable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives. The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron —from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history. Mr. Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of ballad-hunting, Mat Lewis, the Minstrelsy, and the Poems; and 'at last,' says he, 'to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own. He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which they had given rise, etc. etc.': he concluded with saying, 'they have been a mine of wealth to me—but I find I fail in them now—I can no longer make them so good as at first.'—This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet; and when he entered Scott's room next morning, 'he laid his hand,' says Mr. Moore, 'with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said—*Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life.*' They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to. 'Hardly a Magazine is now published,' said Moore, 'that does not contain verses which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation.'—Scott turned with his look of shrewd humour, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, 'Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows'; but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, 'we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons.'—'In complete novelty,' says Moore, 'he seemed

to think, lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days.'

Mr. Moore was not less pleased than Washington Irving had been nine years before with Scott's good friend at Kaeside. He says—'Our walk was to the cottage of Mr. Laidlaw, his bailiff, a gentleman who had been reduced beneath his due level in life, and of whom Scott spoke with the most cordial respect. His intention was, he said, to ask him to come down and dine with us:—the cottage homely, but the man himself, with his broad Scotch dialect, showing all the quiet self-possession of good breeding and good sense.'

At Melrose, writes Mr. Moore—'With the assistance of the sexton, a shrewd, sturdy-mannered original, he explained to me all the parts of the ruin; after which we were shown up to a room in the sexton's house, filled with casts done by himself, from the ornaments, heads, etc. of the abbey. Seeing a large niche empty, Scott said, "Johnny, I'll give you a Virgin and Child to put in that place." Never did I see a happier face than Johnny's at this news—it was all over smiles. "But, Johnny," continued Scott, as we went downstairs, "I'm afraid, if there should be another anti-popish rising, you'll have your house pulled about your ears." When we had got into the carriage, I said, "You have made that man most truly happy."—"Ecod, then," he replied, "there are two of us pleased, for I was very much puzzled to know what to do with that Virgin and Child; and mamma particularly" (meaning Lady Scott) "will be delighted to get rid of it." A less natural man would have allowed me to remain under the impression that he had really done a very generous thing.'

They called the same morning at Huntly Burn:—'I could not help thinking,' says Moore, 'during this homely visit, how astonished some of those French friends of mine would be, among whom the name of Sir Walter Scott is encircled only with high and romantic associations, to see the quiet, neighbourly manner in which he took his seat beside these good old maids, and the familiar ease

with which they treated him in return. No common squire indeed, with but half an idea in his head, could have fallen into the gossip of a humdrum country-visit with more unassumed simplicity.'

Mr. Moore would have been likely to make the same sort of observation, had he accompanied Sir Walter into any other house in the valley; but he could not be expected to appreciate off-hand the very uncommon intellectual merits of 'those old maids' of Huntly Burn —who had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of living from youth to age in the atmosphere of genius, learning, good sense, and high principle.

He was of course delighted at the dinner which followed, when Scott had collected his neighbours to enjoy his guest, with the wit and humour of Sir Adam Fergusson, his picturesque stories of the Peninsula, and his inimitable singing of the old Jacobite ditties. 'Nothing,' he writes, 'could be more hearty and radiant than Scott's enjoyment of them, though his attempts to join in the chorus showed certainly far more of will than of power. He confessed that he hardly knew high from low in music. I told him that Lord Byron, in the same manner, knew nothing of music as an art, but still had a strong feeling of it, and that I had more than once seen the tears come into his eyes as he listened. "I daresay," said Scott, "that Byron's feeling and mine about music might be pretty much the same."—I was much struck by his description of a scene he had once with Lady —— (the divorced Lady ——) upon her eldest boy, who had been born before her marriage with Lord ——, asking her why he himself was not Lord —— (the second title). "Do you hear that?" she exclaimed wildly to Scott; and then rushing to the pianoforte, played, in a sort of frenzy, some hurried airs, as if to drive away the dark thoughts then in her mind. It struck me that he spoke of this lady as if there had been something more than mere friendship between them. He described her as beautiful and full of character.

'In reference to his own ignorance of musical matters,

Scott mentioned that he had been once employed as counsel upon a case where a purchaser of a fiddle had been imposed upon as to its value. He found it necessary, accordingly, to prepare himself by reading all about fiddles and fiddlers that he could find in the Encyclopædia, etc. ; and having got the names of Straduarius, Amati, and such like, glibly upon his tongue, he got swimmingly through his cause. Not long after this, dining at ——, he found himself left alone after dinner with the Duke, who had but two subjects he could talk upon—hunting and music. Having exhausted hunting, Scott thought he would bring forward his lately acquired learning in fiddles, upon which his Grace became quite animated, and immediately whispered some orders to the butler, in consequence of which there soon entered into the room about half-a-dozen tall footmen, each bearing a fiddle-case; and Scott now found his musical knowledge brought to no less trying a test than that of telling, by the tone of each fiddle, as the Duke played it, by what artist it had been made. "By guessing and management," he said, "I got on pretty well till we were, to my great relief, summoned to coffee."'

In handing to me the pages from which I have taken these scraps, Mr. Moore says—'I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give you *carte blanche* to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness; perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one—it was that he was a *thorough good fellow*.' What Scott thought of Moore, the reader shall see presently.

The author of Lalla Rookh's Kelso chaise was followed before many days by a more formidable equipage. The much-talked-of lady who began life as Miss Harriet Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troop, and died Duchess of St. Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs. Coutts, the enormously wealthy

widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could, in those days, have thought a Scotch progress complete unless it included a reception at Abbotsford; but Mrs. Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter, who, indeed, had some remote connexion with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank, I believe, or perhaps the Swintons of Swinton. He had visited her occasionally in London during Mr. Coutts's life, and was very willing to do the honours of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue, leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled at Edinburgh, the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying for poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts—her future lord the Duke of St. Albans—one of his Grace's sisters—a *dame de compagnie* (vulgarly styled a Toady) —a brace of physicians—for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous—and, besides other menials of every grade, two bedchamber women for Mrs. Coutts's own person; she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because, in her widowed condition, she was fearful of ghosts—and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by night. With a little puzzling and cramming, all this train found accommodation; but it so happened that there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs. Coutts's visit agreeable to her. They had heard a great deal, and they saw something, of the ostentation almost inseparable from wealth so vast as had come into her keeping. They were on the outlook for absurdity and merriment; and I need not observe how effectually women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without doing or saying anything that shall expose them to the charge of actual incivility.

Sir Walter, during dinner, did everything in his power to counteract this influence of *the evil eye*, and something

to overawe it; but the spirit of mischief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see that Mrs. Coutts followed these noble dames to the drawing-room in by no means that complacent mood which was customarily sustained, doubtless, by every blandishment of obsequious flattery in this mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen's sederunt short, and soon after joining the ladies, managed to withdraw the youngest, and gayest, and cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (a lovely Marchioness), into his armorial-hall adjoining. 'I said to her' (he told me), 'I want to speak a word with you about Mrs. Coutts. We have known each other a good while, and I know you won't take anything I can say in ill part. It is, I hear, not uncommon among the fine ladies in London to be very well pleased to accept invitations, and even sometimes to hunt after them, to Mrs. Coutts's grand balls and fêtes, and then, if they meet her in any private circle, to practise on her the delicate *manœuvre* called *tipping the cold shoulder*. This you agree with me is shabby; but it is nothing new either to you or to me that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once stoop so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing; but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying, that I think the style you have all received my guest Mrs. Coutts in, this evening, is, to a certain extent, a sin of the same order. You were all told a couple of days ago that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive to-day to stay three nights. Now if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came; and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me out with her.' The beautiful Peeress answered, 'I thank you, Sir Walter—you have done me the great honour to speak as if I had been your daughter, and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and good-will.' One by one,

the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tête-à-tête* with her ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been put into a right train; the Marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, *because* he thought it would please Mrs. Coutts. 'Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs. Coutts.' Mrs. Coutts's brow smoothed, and in the course of half an hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early theatrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam's *Laird of Cockpen*. She stayed out her three days[1]—saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow—and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and, to all appearance, with his other guests.

It may be said (for the most benevolent of men had in his lifetime, and still has, some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs. Coutts's comfort, because he worshipped wealth. I dare not deny that he set more of his affections, during great part of his life, upon worldly things, wealth among others, than might have become such an intellect. One may conceive a sober grandeur of mind, not incompatible with genius as rich as even his, but infinitely more admirable than any genius, incapable of brooding upon any of the pomps and vanities of this life — or caring about money at all, beyond what is necessary for the easy sustenance of nature. But we must, in judging the most powerful of minds, take into account the influences to which they were exposed in the plastic period; and where imagination is visibly the predominant faculty, allowance must be made very largely indeed. Scott's autobiographical fragment, and the anecdotes annexed to it, have been printed in vain, if they have not conveyed the notion of such a training of the mind, fancy, and character, as could hardly fail to suggest dreams and aspirations very likely, were temptation presented, to take the shape of active external ambition—to

[1] Sir Walter often quoted the maxim of an old lady in one of Miss Ferrier's novels—that a visit should never exceed three days, 'the *rest* day—the *drest* day—and the *prest* day.'

prompt a keen pursuit of those resources, without which visions of worldly splendour cannot be realized. But I think the subsequent narrative, with the correspondence embodied in it, must also have satisfied every candid reader that his appetite for wealth was, after all, essentially a vivid yearning for the means of large beneficence. As to his being capable of the silliness—to say nothing of the meanness—of allowing any part of his feelings or demeanour towards others to be affected by their mere possession of wealth, I cannot consider such a suggestion as worthy of much remark. He had a kindness towards Mrs. Coutts, because he knew that, vain and pompous as her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences he remembered, as Pope did when ridiculing the 'lavish cost and little skill' of his Timon,

> Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;—

but he interfered, to prevent her being made uncomfortable in his house, neither more nor less than he would have done, had she come there in her original character of a comic actress, and been treated with coldness as such by his Marchionesses and Countesses.

Since I have been led to touch on what many always considered as the weak part of his character—his over-respect for worldly things in general,—I must say one word as to the matter of rank, which undoubtedly had infinitely more effect on him than money. In the first place, he was all along courted by the great world—not it by him; and, secondly, pleased as he was with its attentions, he derived infinitely greater pleasure from the trusting and hearty affection of his old equals, and the inferiors whose welfare he so unweariedly promoted. But, thirdly, he made acute discriminations among the many different orders of claimants who jostle each other for pre-eminence in the curiously complicated system of modern British society. His imagination had been con-

stantly exercised in recalling and embellishing whatever features of the past it was possible to connect with any pleasing ideas, and a historical name was a charm that literally stirred his blood. But not so a mere title. He reverenced the Duke of Buccleuch—but it was not as a Duke, but as the head of his clan, the representative of the old knights of Branxholm. In the Duke of Hamilton he saw not the premier peer of Scotland, but the lineal heir of the heroic old Douglases; and he had profounder respect for the chief of a Highland Clan, without any title whatever, and with an ill-paid rental of two or three thousand a year, than for the haughtiest magnate in a blue ribbon, whose name did not call up any grand historical reminiscence. I remember once when he had some young Englishmen of high fashion in his house, there arrived a Scotch gentleman of no distinguished appearance, whom he received with a sort of eagerness and *empressement* of reverential courtesy that struck the strangers as quite out of the common. His name was that of a Scotch Earl, however, and no doubt he was that nobleman's son. 'Well,' said one of the Southrons to me,—'I had never heard that the Earl of —— was one of your very greatest lords in this country; even a second son of his, booby though he be, seems to be of wonderful consideration.' The young English lord heard with some surprise, that the visitor in question was a poor lieutenant on half-pay, heir to a tower about as crazy as Don Quixote's, and noways related (at least according to English notions of relationship) to the Earl of ——. 'What, then,' he cried, 'what *can* Sir Walter mean?' 'Why,' said I, 'his meaning is very clear. This gentleman is the male representative (which the Earl of —— may possibly be in the female line) of a knight who is celebrated by our old poet Blind Harry, as having signalized himself by the side of Sir William Wallace, and from whom every Scotchman that bears the name of —— has at least the ambition of being supposed to descend.'—Sir Walter's own title came unsought; and that he accepted it, not in the foolish fancy that such a

title, or any title, could increase his own personal consequence, but because he thought it fair to embrace the opportunity of securing a certain external distinction to his heirs at Abbotsford, was proved pretty clearly by his subsequently declining the greatly higher but intransmissible rank of a Privy Councillor. At the same time, I daresay his ear liked the knightly sound; and undoubtedly he was much pleased with the pleasure his wife took, and gaily acknowledged she took, in being My Lady.

The circumstances of the King's visit in 1822, and others already noted, leave no doubt that imagination enlarged and glorified for him many objects to which it is very difficult for ordinary men in our generation to attach much importance; and perhaps he was more apt to attach importance to such things, during the prosperous course of his own fortunes, than even a liberal consideration of circumstances can altogether excuse. To myself it seems to have been so; yet I do not think the severe critics on this part of his story have kept quite sufficiently in mind how easy it is for us all to undervalue any species of temptation to which we have not happened to be exposed. I am aware, too, that there are examples of men of genius, situated to a certain extent like him, who have resisted and repelled the fascinations against which he was not entirely proof; but I have sometimes thought that they did so at the expense of parts of their character nearer the marrow of humanity than those which his weakness in this way tended to endamage; that they mingled, in short, in their virtuous self-denial, some grains of sacrifice at the shrine of a cold, unsocial, even sulky species of self-conceit. But this digression has already turned out much longer than I intended.

Mrs. Coutts and her three coaches astonished Abbotsford but a few days after I returned to Chiefswood from one of my rapid journeys to London. While in the metropolis on that occasion, I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. For several years preceding 1825, the plethora of

gold on the one hand, and the wildness of impatient poverty on the other, had been uniting their stimulants upon the blood and brain of the most curious of all concretes, individual or national, 'John Bull'; nor had sober 'Sister Peg' escaped the infection of disorders which appear to recur, at pretty regular periods, in the sanguine constitution of her brother. They who had accumulated great masses of wealth, dissatisfied with the usual rates of interest under a conscientious government really protective of property, had embarked in the most perilous and fantastic schemes for piling visionary Pelions upon the real Ossa of their money-bags; and unscrupulous dreamers, who had all to gain and nothing to lose, found it easy to borrow, from cash-encumbered neighbours, the means of pushing adventures of their own devising, more extravagant than had been heard of since the days of the South Sea and Mississippi bubbles. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely-increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling, in speculations worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that *the trade* (so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever; and persons of any foresight who knew (as I did not at that time know) the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors) are bound together, high and low, town and country, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come ere long, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumoured that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares—that another was the leading director of a railway

company—a third of a gas company—while a fourth house had risked about £100,000 in a cast upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*,—it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances, and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints to the tune of *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ* which reached my ear, were some concerning a splendid bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew the Edinburgh house of Constable to be closely connected in business. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs. Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I transmitted to him the rumours in question as I received them. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend of mine, well known to Scott also, told me that people were talking doubtfully about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable, that if Constable fell into any pecuniary embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty to tell him this whisper also; and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was 'rooted, as well as branched, like the oak.' Knowing his almost painfully accurate habits of business as to matters of trivial moment, I doubted not that he had ample grounds for being quite easy as to any concerns of his own with his publisher; and though I turned northwards with anxiety enough, none of the burden had reference to that subject.

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to —(Mr. William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn,—who, by the way, was also on habits of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly) —which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something 'rotten in the state of *Muscovy*.' Mr. Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book.

This letter reached me about five o'clock, as I was sitting down to dinner; and, about an hour afterwards, I rode over to Abbotsford, to communicate its contents. I found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whisky and water and cigar—at this time, whenever there was no company, 'his custom always in the afternoon.' I gave him Mr. Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good-humour of look and voice, 'I am much obliged to you for coming over, but you may rely upon it Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style; but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta*. Don't you see,' he added, lighting another cigar, 'that Wright could not have heard of such a transaction the very day it happened? And can you doubt, that if Constable had been informed of it yesterday, this day's post must have brought me intelligence direct from him?' I ventured to suggest that this last point did not seem to me clear; that Constable might not, perhaps, in such a case, be in so great a hurry with his intelligence. 'Ah!' said he, 'the Crafty and James Ballantyne have been so much connected in business, that Fatsman would be sure to hear of anything so important; and I like the notion of his hearing it, and not sending me one of his malagrugrous *billets-doux*. He could as soon keep his eyebrows in their place if you told him there was a fire in his nursery.'

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Peter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of the brook looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in helping his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings. 'You are surprised,'

he said, 'to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright's epistle than I cared *to let on;* and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I stayed an hour with him, and I have now the pleasure to tell you that *all is right.* There was not a word of truth in the story. He is fast as Ben Lomond; and as Mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again.'

We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gaily afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbour a suspicion, that if anything should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the nonpayment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne's, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year's profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum—any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne's would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret; we well knew that James was his confidential critic—his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood. Nor was I ignorant that Scott had a share in the property of Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal. I hinted, under the year 1820, that a dispute arose about the line to be adopted by that paper in the matter of the Queen's trial, and that Scott employed his authority towards overruling the Editor's disposition to espouse the anti-ministerial side of that unhappy question. He urged every argument in his power, and in vain; for James had

a just sense of his own responsibility as editor, and conscientiously differing from Sir Walter's opinion, insisted, with honourable firmness, on maintaining his own until he should be denuded of his office. I happened to be present at one of their conversations on this subject, and in the course of it Scott used language which distinctly implied that he spoke not merely as a friend, but as a joint-proprietor of the Journal. Nor did it seem at all strange that this should be so. But that Sir Walter was and had all along been James's partner in the great printing concern, neither I, nor, I believe, any member of his family, had entertained the slightest suspicion prior to the coming calamities which were now 'casting their shadows before.'

It is proper to add here, that the story about the banker's throwing up the book was, as subsequent revelations attested, groundless. Sir Walter's first guess as to its origin proved correct.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's Ravenna Diary, with permission for my neighbour also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes, some of which have lately been made public, as the rest will doubtless be hereafter. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to Sir Walter that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order —giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him,—and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as 'after-times would not willingly let die,' had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion,—he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured ; and Sir Walter began the journal, from which

I shall begin, in the next chapter, to draw copiously. The occupation of a few stray minutes in his dressing-room at getting up in the morning, or after he had retired for the night, was found a pleasant variety for him. He also kept the book by him when in his study, and often had recourse to it when anything puzzled him and called for a halt in the prosecution of what he considered (though posterity will hardly do so) a more important task. It was extremely fortunate that he took up this scheme exactly at the time when he settled seriously to the history of Buonaparte's personal career. The sort of preparation which every chapter of that book now called for has been already alluded to; and—although, when he had fairly read himself up to any one great cycle of transactions, his old spirit roused itself in full energy, and he traced the record with as rapid and glowing a pencil as he had ever wielded —there were minutes enough, and hours, and perhaps days, of weariness, depression, and languor, when (unless this silent confidant had been at hand) even he perhaps might have made no use of his writing-desk.

Even the new resource of journalizing, however, was not sufficient. He soon convinced himself that it would facilitate, not impede, his progress with Napoleon, to have a work of imagination in hand also. The success of the Tales of the Crusaders had been very high; and Constable, well aware that it had been his custom of old to carry on two romances at the same time, was now too happy to encourage him in beginning Woodstock, to be taken up whenever the historical MS. should be in advance of the press.

Of the progress both of the Novel and the History, the Journal will afford us fuller and clearer details than I have been able to produce as to any of his preceding works; but before I open that sealed book, I believe it will be satisfactory to the reader that I should present (as briefly as I can) my own view of the melancholy change in Sir Walter's worldly fortunes, to which almost every page of the Diary, during several sad and toilsome years, contains some allusion. So doing, I shall avoid (in some

measure at least) the necessity of interrupting, by awkward explanations, the easy tenor of perhaps the most candid Diary that ever man penned.

The early history of Scott's connexion with the Ballantynes has been already given in abundant detail; and I have felt it my duty not to shrink, at whatever pain to my own feelings or those of others, from setting down, plainly and distinctly, my own impressions of the character, manners, and conduct of those two very dissimilar brothers. I find, without surprise, that my representations of them have not proved satisfactory to their surviving relations. That I cannot help—though I sincerely regret, having been compelled, in justice to Scott, to become the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms, animated, I doubt not, like my own, by veneration for his memory, and respected by me for combining that feeling with a tender concern for names so intimately connected with his throughout long years of mutual confidence. But I have been entirely mistaken if those to whom I allude, or any others of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast the slightest imputation on the moral rectitude of the elder Ballantyne. No suspicion of that nature ever crossed my mind. I believe James to have been, from first to last, a perfectly upright man; that his principles were of a lofty stamp—his feelings pure, even to simplicity. His brother John had many amiable as well as amusing qualities, and I am far from wishing to charge even him with any deep or deliberate malversation. Sir Walter's own epithet of 'my little picaroon' indicates all that I desired to imply on that score. But John was, from mere giddiness of head and temper, incapable of conducting any serious business advantageously, either for himself or for others; nor dare I hesitate to express my conviction that, from failings of a different sort, honest James was hardly a better manager than the picaroon.

He had received the education, not of a printer, but of a solicitor; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important

business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types—no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his; but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome he was satisfied. He had been instructed, that on every £50 paid in his men's wages, the master-printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit; and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connexion with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street—not certainly an idle man—quite the reverse, though naturally indolent—but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.

He was busy, indeed; and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour; but it consisted simply and solely in the correction and revisal of proof-sheets. It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of the printer; and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment—who had undertaken the pecuniary management of the concern. In every other great printing-house that I have known anything about, there are intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who

devote themselves to this species of labour, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr. Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson; but the author of Clarissa did not disdain to look after the presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. I quoted, in a preceding volume,[1] a letter of Scott's, written when John Ballantyne and Co.'s bookselling house was breaking up, in which he says, 'One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office *henceforth;* it is the sheet-anchor.' This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a small cabinet on the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper—and he considered that matter as fondly and proudly as Mr. Pott in Pickwick does his Gazette of Eatanswill—or correcting proof-sheets, or writing critical notes and letters to the Author of Waverley. Shakespeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke were at his elbow; but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the 'large sums abstracted from the bookselling house for the use of the printing-office.'[2] Yet that bookselling house was from the first a hopeless one; whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from £2000 to £3000 a year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some remedy for this radical disorder, must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John Ballantyne (who had served a brief apprenticeship in a London banking-house) introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and

[1] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 272.
[2] See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 461.

raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *states* and *calendars*—the wildernesses and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John Ballantyne died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail of those affairs then devolved upon James; and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable balances of figures thus committed to his sole trust—but in which his all, was not all that was involved.

I need not recapitulate the history of the connexion between these Ballantyne firms and that of Constable. It was traced as accurately as my means permitted in the preceding volumes, with an eye to the catastrophe. I am willing to believe that kindly feelings had no small share in inducing Constable to uphold the credit of John Ballantyne and Company, in their several successive struggles to avoid the exposure of bankruptcy. He was, with pitiable foibles enough, and grievous faults, a man of warm, and therefore, I hardly doubt, of sympathizing temperament. Vain to excess, proud at the same time, haughty, arrogant, presumptuous, despotic—he had still, I am willing to believe, a heart. Persons who knew him longer and better than I did, assure me of their conviction that, in spite of many direct professional hindrances and thwartings, the offspring (as *he* viewed matters) partly of Tory jealousy, and partly of poetical caprice—he had, even at an early period of his life, formed a genuine affection for Scott's person, as well as a most profound veneration for his genius. I think it very possible that he began his assistance of the Ballantyne companies mainly under this generous influence—and I also believe that he had, in different ways, a friendly leaning in favour of both James and John themselves. But when he, in his overweening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as

his lordly vanity, in shielding these friends from commercial dishonour, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by and by, when, advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this 'Napoleon of the press'—still as of old buoyed up to the ultimate result of his grand operations by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination—appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important; and who can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see, that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear, that he ought to have applied on these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not, I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history; but various incidents in that history, which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he had never done so; and I am unable to account for this having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire, that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thoroughgoing superinspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his heyday, might be heard whistling on his clerk, John Stevenson (True Jock), from the *sanctum* behind the shop, with, 'Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o' stamps.' Such things might well enough be believed of that hare-brained creature; but how sober, solemn James could have made up his mind, as he must

have done, to follow much the same wild course whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The books, of course, were kept at the printing-house; and Scott, no doubt, had it in his power to examine them as often as he liked to go there for that purpose. But did he ever descend the Canongate *once* on such an errand? I certainly much question it. I think it very likely that he now and then cast a rapid glance over the details of a week's or a month's operations; but no man who has followed him throughout can dream that he ever grappled with the sum-total.[1] During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament House, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof-sheet in the outer room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet at the corner; and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising—between Meg Dods and Captain Mac-Turk, for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

How shrewdly Scott lectures Terry in May 1825:—'The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills.'—'It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment arrive to a certainty.'—'I should not like to see *you* take flight like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas, only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake; this would be a heart-breaking business.'—'You must be careful that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of *the blunt*,' etc. etc. Who can read these words—and consider that, at the very hour when they fell from Scott's pen, he was meditating a new purchase of land to the extent of £40,000—and that nevertheless the 'certainty of the arrival of times of payment for discounting bills'

[1] It is now ascertained and admitted that the Ballantyne books were *never balanced* during the later years of the connexion.—[1839.]

was within a few months of being realized to his own ruin ;—who can read such words, under such a date, and not sigh the only comment, *sic vos non vobis ?*

The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former volume where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late Baronet had 'kept day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grassmarket.*' It is, nevertheless, true that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. The instructions he gave his son, when first joining the 18th Hussars, about the best method of keeping accounts, were copied from his own practice. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike-gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to : but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, 'the time for paying which up, must certainly come,' without keeping any efficient watch on their proceedings—without knowing, any one Christmas, for how many thousands, or rather tens of thousands, he was responsible as *a printer in the Canongate !*

This is sufficiently astonishing—and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable ; but still, in the absence of a circumstance which Sir Walter, however vigilant, could hardly have been expected to anticipate as within the range of possibility, he would have been in no danger of a 'check that must throw him on the breakers'—of finding himself, after his flutterings over The Happy Valley, 'in the lake.' He could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary

alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a bill for the purpose of the other's raising money among the bankers, there should, in case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants; and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also —such was the incredible looseness of it—the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour—these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie unenquired about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous 'sheaf of stamps.' Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. They were nearly all flung into circulation in the course of this maddening period of panic. And by this one circumstance it came to pass, that, supposing Ballantyne and Co. to have, at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of £25,000, they were legally responsible for £50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the House of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been 'lifted off his feet,' in Burns's phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of the Edinburgh Review. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed; and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his 'appetite grew with what it fed on,' and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other, in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, how-

ever vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. He had with the only person who might have been supposed capable of controlling him in his later years, the authority of age and a quasi-parental relationship to sustain the natural influence of great and commanding talents; his proud temperament and his glowing imagination played into each other's hands; and he scared suspicion, or trampled remonstrance, whenever (which probably was seldom) he failed to infuse the fervour of his own self-confidence. But even his gross imprudence in the management of his own great business would not have been enough to involve him in absolute ruin: had the matter halted there, and had he, suspending, as he meant to do, all minor operations, concentred his energies, in alliance with Scott, upon the new and dazzling adventure of the Cheap Miscellany, I have no doubt the damage of early misreckonings would soon have been altogether obliterated. But what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious 'Sheafmen' had been to him. The House of Hurst, Robinson, and Co. had long been his London agents and correspondents; and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate Company did with him—and upon a still larger scale. They had done what he did not—or at least did not to any very culpable extent: they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business. It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops! When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit without stint or limit—while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped! And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too painfully conscious of the 'strong tricks' he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable; though an offence lay behind, which even his charity could not forgive. Of that I need not as yet speak. I have done all that seems

to me necessary for enabling the reader to apprehend the nature and extent of the pecuniary difficulties in which Scott was about to be involved, when he commenced his Diary of 1825.

For the rest, his friends, and above all, posterity, are not left to consider his fate without consoling reflections. They who knew and loved him, must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity. And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labour, and power, which his works now constitute. The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind, would have developed few of its miraculous resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters. We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty. We should try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been, of the author of such a series of romances. We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours; and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which he so gently reopened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind—I mean that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflections with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway—beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other *artist's* recorded

character and history; but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty, as well as reap the glory, of this lifelong abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

This was for him the last year of many things; among others, of Sibyl Grey and *the Abbotsford Hunt.* Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Mr. Scott of Gala's ground, he adventured to leap *the Catrail*—that venerable relic of the days of

> Reged wide
> And fair Strath-Clyde,

of which the reader may remember many notices in his early letters to George Ellis. He was severely bruised and shattered; and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence, without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER LXV

Sir Walter's Diary begun, November 20, 1825—*Sketches of various Friends—William Clerk—Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe—Lord Abercrombie—The First Earl of Minto—Lord Byron—Henry Mackenzie—Chief Baron Shepherd—Solicitor-General Hope—Thomas Moore—Charles Mathews—Count Davidoff, etc. etc.—Society of Edinburgh—Religious opinions and feelings—Various alarms about the house of Hurst, Robinson, & Company—'Storm blows over'—and Song of Bonny Dundee, written at Christmas.*

1825

THE Journal, on which we are about to enter, has on the title-page, 'Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart., his Gurnal';—and this footnote to *Gurnal*, 'A hard word, so spelt on the authority of Miss Sophia Scott, now Mrs. Lockhart.' This is a little joke, alluding to a note-book kept by his eldest girl during one of the Highland expeditions of earlier days, in which he was accompanied by his wife and children. The *motto* is,—

> As I walked by myself,
> I talked to myself,
> And thus myself said to me.—*Old Song.*

These lines are quoted also in his reviewal of Pepys' Diary. That book was published just before he left Edinburgh in July. It was, I believe, the only one he took with him to Ireland; and I never observed him

more delighted with any book whatsoever. He had ever afterwards many of its queer turns and phrases on his lips.

The reader cannot expect that any chapter in a Diary of this sort should be printed *in extenso* within a few years of the writer's death. The editor has, for reasons which need not be explained, found it necessary to omit some passages altogether—to abridge others—and very frequently to substitute asterisks or arbitrary initials for names. But wherever omissions or alterations have been made, these were dictated by regard for the feelings of living persons; and, if any passages which have been retained should prove offensive to such feelings, there is no apology to be offered, but that the editor found they could not be struck out, without losing some statement of fact, opinion, or sentiment, which it seemed impossible to sacrifice without injustice to Sir Walter Scott's character and history.

DIARY

'*Edinburgh, November* 20, 1825.—I have all my life regretted that I did not keep a regular Journal. I have myself lost recollection of much that was interesting; and I have deprived my family of some curious information by not carrying this resolution into effect. I have bethought me, on seeing lately some volumes of Byron's notes, that he probably had hit upon the right way of keeping such a memorandum-book, by throwing out all pretence to regularity and order, and marking down events just as they occurred to recollection. I will try this plan; and behold, I have a handsome locked volume, such as might serve for a lady's Album. *Nota bene*—John Lockhart, and Anne, and I are to raise a Society for the Suppression of Albums. It is a most troublesome shape of mendicity. Sir, your autograph—a line of poetry—or a prose sentence!—Among all the sprawling sonnets, and blotted trumpery that dishonours these miscellanies, a

man must have a good stomach that can swallow this botheration as a compliment.

'I was in Ireland last summer, and had a most delightful tour.—There is much less of exaggeration about the Irish than might have been suspected. Their poverty is not exaggerated; it is on the extreme verge of human misery; their cottages would scarce serve for pig-sties, even in Scotland—and their rags seem the very refuse of a rag-shop, and are disposed on their bodies with such ingenious variety of wretchedness, that you would think nothing but some sort of perverted taste could have assembled so many shreds together. You are constantly fearful that some knot or loop will give, and place the individual before you in all the primitive simplicity of Paradise. Then for their food, they have only potatoes, and too few of them. Yet the men look stout and healthy, the women buxom and well-coloured.

'Dined with us, being Sunday, Will. Clerk and C. Sharpe. William Clerk is the second son of the celebrated author of "Naval Tactics." I have known him intimately since our college days; and to my thinking, never met a man of greater powers, or more complete information on all desirable subjects. In youth he had strongly the Edinburgh *prurítus disputandi;* but habits of society have greatly mellowed it, and though still anxious to gain your suffrage to his views, he endeavours rather to conciliate your opinion than conquer it by force. Still there is enough of tenacity of sentiment to prevent, in London society, where all must go slack and easy, W. C. from rising to the very top of the tree as a conversation man; who must not only wind the thread of his argument gracefully, but also know when to let go. But I like the Scotch taste better; there is more matter, more information—above all, more spirit in it. Clerk will, I am afraid, leave the world little more than the report of his powers. He is too indolent to finish any considerable work. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is another very remarkable man. He was bred for a clergyman, but never took orders. He has infinite wit and a great turn

for antiquarian lore, as the publications of Kirkton, etc. bear witness. His drawings are the most fanciful and droll imaginable—a mixture between Hogarth and some of those foreign masters who painted temptations of St. Anthony, and such grotesque subjects. As a poet he has not a very strong touch. Strange that his finger-ends can describe so well what he cannot bring out clearly and firmly in words. If he were to make drawing a resource, it might raise him a large income. But though a lover of antiquities, and, therefore, of expensive trifles, C. K. S. is too aristocratic to use his art to assist his purse. He is a very complete genealogist, and has made many detections in Douglas and other books on pedigree, which our nobles would do well to suppress if they had an opportunity. Strange that a man should be curious after scandal of centuries old! Not but Charles loves it fresh and fresh also, for being very much a fashionable man, he is always master of the reigning report, and he tells the anecdote with such gusto that there is no helping sympathizing with him—a peculiarity of voice adding not a little to the general effect. My idea is, that C. K. S., with his oddities, tastes, satire, and high aristocratic feelings, resembles Horace Walpole — perhaps in his person also, in a general way. — See Miss Hawkins's Anecdotes[1] for a description of the author of the Castle of Otranto.—No other company at dinner except my cheerful and good-humoured friend *Missie* Macdonald,[2] so called in fondness. One bottle of champaign, with the ladies' assistance, two of claret.—I observe that both these great connoisseurs were very nearly, if not quite agreed, that there are *no* absolutely undoubted originals of Queen Mary. But how, then, should we be so very distinctly informed as to her features? What has become of all the originals which suggested these innumerable copies? Surely Mary must have been as unfortunate in this as in other particulars of her life.

[1] Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs, collected by Lætitia Matilda Hawkins, 8vo, London, 1822, pp. 91-117, 308-313.

[2] Miss Macdonald Buchanan of Drummakill.

'*November* 21, 1825. — I am enamoured of my journal. I wish the zeal may but last.—Once more of Ireland. I said their poverty was not exaggerated — neither is their wit—nor their good-humour—nor their whimsical absurdity—nor their courage. *Wit.*—I gave a fellow a shilling on some occasion when sixpence was the fee. "Remember you owe me sixpence, Pat." "May your honour live till I pay you." There was courtesy as well as art in this, and all the clothes on Pat's back would have been dearly bought by the sum in question.

'*Good-humour.*—There is perpetual kindness in the Irish cabin—butter-milk, potatoes—a stool is offered, or a stone is rolled that your honour may sit down and be out of the smoke, and those who beg everywhere else seem desirous to exercise free hospitality in their own houses. Their natural disposition is turned to gaiety and happiness: while a Scotchman is thinking about the term-day, or, if easy on that subject, about hell in the next world—while an Englishman is making a little hell in the present, because his muffin is not well roasted — Pat's mind is always turned to fun and ridicule. They are terribly excitable, to be sure, and will murder you on slight suspicion, and find out next day that it was all a mistake, and that it was not yourself they meant to kill, at all at all.

'*Absurdity.*—They were widening the road near Lord Claremont's seat as we passed. A number of cars were drawn up together at a particular point, where we also halted, as we understood they were blowing a rock, and the *shot* was expected presently to go off. After waiting two minutes or so, a fellow called out something, and our carriage as a planet, and the cars for satellites, started all forward at once, the Irishmen whooping, and the horses galloping. Unable to learn the meaning of this, I was only left to suppose that they had delayed firing the intended *shot* till we should pass, and that we were passing quickly to make the delay as short as possible. No such thing. By dint of making great haste, we got within ten yards of the rock just when the blast took place, throwing

dust and gravel on our carriage; and had our postilion brought us a little nearer (it was not for want of holloing and flogging that he did not), we should have had a still more serious share of the explosion. The explanation I received from the drivers was, that they had been told by the overseer that as the *mine* had been *so long* in going off, he dared say we would have time to pass it—so we just waited long enough to make the danger imminent. I have only to add, that two or three people got behind the carriage, just for nothing but to see how our honours got past.

'Went to the Oil Gas Committee this morning, of which concern I am President, or Chairman. This brings me into company with a body of active business-beings, money-making citizens of Edinburgh, chiefly Whigs, by the way, whose sentiments and proceedings amuse me. The stock is rather low in the market.

'Dined with Sir Robert Dundas, where we met Lord and Lady Melville. My little *nieces* (*ex officio*) gave us some pretty music. I do not know and cannot utter a note of music; and complicated harmonies seem to me a babble of confused though pleasing sounds. Yet simple melodies, especially if connected with words and ideas, have as much effect on me as on most people. But then I hate to hear a young person sing without feeling and expression suited to the song. I cannot bear a voice that has no more life in it than a pianoforte or a bugle-horn. There is about all the fine arts a something of soul and spirit, which, like the vital principle in man, defies the research of the most critical anatomist. You feel where it is not, yet you cannot describe what it is you want. Sir Joshua, or some other great painter, was looking at a picture on which much pains had been bestowed—"Why, yes," he said, in a hesitating manner, "it is very clever—very well done—can't find fault; but it wants something; it wants—it wants—d—n me—it wants THAT"—throwing his hand over his head, and snapping his fingers. Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. Next to him David MacCulloch for Scotch songs. The

last, when a boy at Dumfries, was much admired by Burns, who used to get him to try over the words which he composed to new melodies. He is brother to MacCulloch of Ardwell.

'*November* 22.—*Moore.*—I saw Moore (for the first time, I may say) this season. We had indeed met in public twenty years ago. There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little—very little man. Less, I think, than Lewis, and something like him in person; God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it.

'I was aware that Byron had often spoken, both in private society and in his Journal, of Moore and myself, in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard; so I was curious to see what there could be in common betwixt us, Moore having lived so much in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians; Moore a scholar, I none; he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note; he a democrat, I an aristocrat—with many other points of difference; besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humoured fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions; and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to contemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in an alehouse, and who called himself "*the great Twalmly—inventor of the flood-gate iron for smoothing linen.*" He also enjoys the *mot pour rire*, and so do I. It was a pity

that nothing save the total destruction of Byron's Memoirs would satisfy his executors. But there was a reason—*Premat Nox alta.* It would be a delightful addition to life if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one. We went to the theatre together, and the house being luckily a good one, received T. M. with rapture. I could have hugged them, for it paid back the debt of the kind reception I met with in Ireland.

'Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H. & R., Constable's great agents. Should they *go*, it is not likely that Constable can stand, and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. and myself. Thank God, I have enough to pay more than 20s. in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good; but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalizing, or moralizing either. Necessity is like a sour-faced cook-maid, and I a turn-spit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If Woodstock can be out by 25th January it will do much, and it is possible. Could not write to purpose for thick-coming fancies.

My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, sir;
To keep the temper pin in tiff,
Employs aft my hand, sir.

'Went to dine at the Lord Justice-Clerk's, as I thought by invitation, but it was for Tuesday se'en-night. Returned very well pleased, not being exactly in the humour for company, and had a beef-steak. My appetite is surely, excepting as to quantity, that of a farmer, for, eating moderately of anything, my epicurean pleasure is in the most simple diet. Wine I seldom taste when alone, and use instead a little spirits and water. I have of late diminished the quantity, for fear of a weakness inductive to a diabetes—a disease which broke up my father's health, though one of

the most temperate men who ever lived. I smoke a couple of cigars instead, which operates equally as a sedative—

> Just to drive the cold winter away,
> And drown the fatigues of the day.

I smoked a good deal about twenty years ago when at Ashestiel; but coming down one morning to the parlour, I found, as the room was small and confined, that the smell was unpleasant, and laid aside the use of the *Nicotian weed* for many years; but was again led to use it by the example of my son, a hussar officer, and my son-in-law, an Oxford student. I could lay it aside to-morrow; I laugh at the dominion of custom in this and many things.

> We make the giants first, and then—*do not* kill them.

'*November* 23.—On comparing notes with Moore, I was confirmed in one or two points which I had always laid down in considering poor Byron. One was, that like Rousseau he was apt to be very suspicious, and a plain downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me, that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet, one of which, it must be remembered, was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this, by telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to. In another point, Moore confirmed my previous opinion, namely, that Byron loved mischief-making. Moore had written to him, cautioning him against the project of establishing the paper called The Liberal, in communion with men on whom he said the world had set its mark. Byron showed this to the parties. Shelley wrote a modest and rather affecting expostulation to Moore. These two peculiarities of extreme suspicion and love of mischief are both shades of the malady which certainly tinctured some part of the character of this mighty genius; and without

some tendency towards which, genius perhaps cannot exist to great extent. The wheels of a machine, to play rapidly, must not fit with the utmost exactness, else the attrition diminishes the impetus.

'Another of Byron's peculiarities was the love of mystifying, which, indeed, may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance:—William Bankes expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had bored him about this dedication till he had said, "Well, it shall be so, provided you will write it yourself"; and affirmed that Hobhouse did write the high-coloured dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle. Byron was disposed to think all men of imagination were addicted to mix fiction (or poetry) in their prose. He used to say he dared believe the celebrated courtezan of Venice, about whom Rousseau makes so piquante a story, was, if one could see her, a draggle-tailed wench enough. I believe that he embellished his own amours considerably, and that he was, in many respects, *le fanfaron de vices qu'il n'avoit pas*. He loved to be thought woeful, mysterious, and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes. I believe the whole to have been the creation and sport of a wild and powerful fancy. In the same manner he *crammed* people, as it is termed, about duels and the like, which never existed, or were much exaggerated.

'What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature, from the school-magisterial style to the lackadaisical. His example has formed a sort of upper house of poetry;—but

There will be many peers
Ere such another Byron.

'* * * Talking of Abbotsford, it begins to be haunted by too much company of every kind, but especially foreigners. I do not like them. I hate fine waistcoats, and breast-pins upon dirty shirts. I detest the impudence that pays a stranger compliments, and harangues about an author's works in his own house, which is surely ill-breeding. Moreover, they are seldom long of making it evident that they know nothing about what they are talking of, excepting having seen the Lady of the Lake at the opera.

'Dined at St. Catherine's[1] with the Lord Advocate, Lord Melville, Lord Justice-Clerk, Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth,—all class companions, and acquainted well for more than forty years. All excepting Lord J. C. were at Fraser's class, High School. Boyle joined us at college. There are, besides, Sir Adam Fergusson, Colin Mackenzie, James Hope, Dr. James Buchan, Claud Russell, and perhaps two or three more of and about the same period—but

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.

'*November 24th.*—Talking of strangers, London held, some four or five years since, one of those animals who are lions at first, but by transmutation of two seasons, become in regular course *bores*—Ugo Foscolo by name, a haunter of Murray's shop and of literary parties. Ugly as a baboon, and intolerably conceited, he spluttered, blustered, and disputed, without even knowing the principles upon which men of sense render a reason, and screamed all the while like a pig with a knife in his throat. Another such animalaccio is a brute of a Marquis de * * *, who lately inflicted two days on us at Abbotsford. These gentry never know what to make of themselves in the forenoon, but sit tormenting the women to play at proverbs and such trash.

[1] St. Catherine's, the seat of Sir William Rae, Bart., then Lord Advocate, is about three miles from Edinburgh.

'*Foreigner of a different caste.* There was lately at Abbotsford, and is here for education just now, a young Count Davidoff, with his tutor, Mr. Collyer. He is nephew of the famous Orloffs. It is quite surprising how much sense and sound thinking this youth has at the early age of sixteen, without the least self-conceit or forwardness. On the contrary, he seems kind, modest, and ingenuous.[1] To questions which I asked about the state of Russia, he answered with the precision and accuracy of twice his years. I should be sorry the saying were verified in him—

So wise so young, they say, do ne'er live long.[2]

I saw also at Abbotsford two Frenchmen whom I liked, friends of Miss Dumergue. One, called Le Noir, is the author of a tragedy which he had the grace never to quote, and which I, though poked by some malicious persons, had *not* the grace even to hint at. They were disposed at first to be complimentary, but I convinced them it was not the custom here, and they took it well, and were agreeable.

'A little bilious this morning, for the first time these six months. It cannot be the London matters which stick on my stomach, for that is mending, and may have good effects on myself and others.

'Dined with Robert Cockburn. Company, Lord Melville and family; Sir John and Lady Hope; Lord and Lady R. Kerr, and so forth. Combination of colliers general, and coals up to double price; the men will not work *although*, or rather *because* they can make from thirty to forty shillings per week. Lord R. Kerr told us he had a letter from Lord Forbes (son of Earl Granard, Ireland), that he was asleep in his house at Castle Forbes, when awakened by a sense of suffocation, which deprived him of the power of stirring a limb, yet left him the consciousness that the house was on fire. At this moment,

[1] M. Davidoff has, in his mature life, amply justified Sir Walter's prognostications. He has, I understand, published in the Russian language, a tribute to the memory of Scott. But his Travels in Greece and Asia Minor are well known, and considered as in a high degree honourable to his taste and learning.—[1839.]

[2] King Richard III. Act III. Scene 1.

and while his apartment was in flames, his large dog jumped on the bed, seized his shirt, and dragged him to the staircase, where the fresh air restored his powers of existence and of escape. This is very different from most cases of preservation of life by the canine race, when the animal generally jumps into the water, in which element he has force and skill. That of fire is as hostile to him as to mankind.

'*November* 25.—Read Jeffrey's neat and well-intended address to the mechanics upon their combinations. Will it do good? Umph. It takes only the hand of a Lilliputian to light a fire, but would require the diuretic powers of Gulliver to extinguish it. The Whigs will live and die in the heresy that the world is ruled by little pamphlets and speeches, and that if you can sufficiently demonstrate that a line of conduct is most consistent with men's interest, you have therefore and thereby demonstrated that they will at length, after a few speeches on the subject, adopt it of course. In this case we should have no need of laws or churches, for I am sure there is no difficulty in proving that moral, regular, and steady habits conduce to men's best interest, and that vice is not sin merely, but folly. But of these men, each has passions and prejudices, the gratification of which he prefers, not only to the general weal, but to that of himself as an individual. Under the action of these wayward impulses, a man drinks to-day, though he is sure of starving to-morrow; he murders to-morrow, though he is sure to be hanged on Wednesday; and people are so slow to believe that which makes against their own predominant passions, that mechanics will combine to raise the price for one week, though they destroy the manufacture for ever. The best remedy seems to be the probable supply of labourers from other trades. Jeffrey proposes each mechanic shall learn some other trade than his own, and so have two strings to his bow. He does not consider the length of a double apprenticeship. To make a man a good weaver and a good tailor, would require as much time as the patriarch served for his two

wives. Each mechanic has, indeed, a second trade, for he can dig and do rustic work. Perhaps the best reason for breaking up the association will prove to be the expenditure of the money which they have been simple enough to levy from the industrious for the support of the idle. How much provision for the sick and the aged, the widow and the orphan, has been expended in the attempt to get wages which the manufacturer cannot afford them, at any possible chance of selling his commodity!

'I had a bad fall last night coming home. There were unfinished houses at the east end of Athole Crescent, and as I was on foot, I crossed the street to avoid the materials which lay about; but, deceived by the moonlight, I slipped ankle-deep into a sea of mud (honest earth and water, thank God), and fell on my hands. Never was there such a representative of *Wall* in Pyramus and Thisbe—I was absolutely rough-cast. Luckily Lady S. had retired when I came home; so I enjoyed my tub of water without either remonstrance or condolences. Cockburn's hospitality will get the benefit and renown of my downfall, and yet has no claim to it. In future, though, I must take my coach at night—a control on one's freedom, but it must be submitted to. I found a letter from Cadell, giving a cheering account of things in London. Their correspondent is getting into his strength. Three days ago I would have been contented to buy this *consola*, as Judy says,[1] dearer than by a dozen falls in the mud.

N.B. Within eight weeks after recording this graceful act of submission, I found I was unable to keep a carriage at all.

'Mrs. Coutts, with the Duke of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte Beauclerk, called to take leave of us. When at Abbotsford, his suit throve but coldly. She made me, I believe, her confidant in sincerity. She had refused him twice, and decidedly: he was merely on the footing of

[1] This alludes to a strange old woman, keeper of a public-house among the Wicklow mountains, who, among a world of oddities, cut short every word ending in *tion*, by the omission of the termination. *Consola* for consolation—*bothera* for botheration, etc. etc. Lord Plunkett had taken care to parade Judy and all her peculiarities.

friendship. I urged it was akin to love. She allowed she might marry the Duke, only she had at present not the least intention that way. Is this frank admission more favourable for the Duke than an absolute protestation against the possibility of such a marriage? I think not. It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutts's parties, and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth; most willing to do good, if the means be shown to her. She can be very entertaining, too, as she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without some ostentation. But what then? If the Duke marries her, he ensures an immense fortune; if she marries him, she has the first rank. The disparity of ages concerns no one but themselves; so they have my consent to marry, if they can get each other's. Just as this is written, enter my Lord of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte, to beg I would recommend a book of sermons to Mrs. Coutts. Much obliged for her good opinion: recommended Logan's—one poet should always speak for another. The mission, I suppose, was a little display on the part of good Mrs. Coutts of authority over her high aristocratic suitor. I did not suspect her of turning *devotee*, and retract my consent as given above, unless she remains "burly, brisk, and jolly." Dined quiet with wife and daughter. Robert Cadell looked in in the evening on business.

'I here register my purpose to practise economics. I have little temptation to do otherwise. Abbotsford is all that I can make it, and too large for the property; so I resolve—

'No more building;

'No purchases of land, till times are quite safe;

'No buying books or expensive trifles—I mean to any extent; and

'Clearing off encumbrances, with the returns of this year's labour;

'Which resolutions, with health and my habits of industry, will make me "sleep in spite of thunder."

'After all, it is hard that the vagabond stock-jobbing Jews should, for their own purposes, make such a shake of credit as now exists in London, and menace the credit of men trading on sure funds like Hurst and Robinson. It is just like a set of pickpockets, who raise a mob, in which honest folks are knocked down and plundered, that they may pillage safely in the midst of the confusion they have excited.

'*November* 26.—The Court met late, and sat till *one*; detained from that hour till four o'clock, being engaged in the perplexed affairs of Mr. James Stewart of Brugh. This young gentleman is heir to a property of better than £1000 a year in Orkney. His mother married very young, and was wife, mother, and widow, in the course of the first year. Being unfortunately under the direction of a careless agent, she was unlucky enough to embarrass her affairs. I was asked to accept the situation of one of the son's curators; and trust to clear out his affairs and hers —at least I will not fail for want of application. I have lent her £300 on a second (and therefore doubtful) security over her house in Newington, bought for £1000, and on which £600 is already secured. I have no connexion with the family except that of compassion, and may not be rewarded even by thanks when the young man comes of age. I have known my father often so treated by those whom he had laboured to serve. But if we do not run some hazard in our attempts to do good, where is the merit of them?—So I will bring through my Orkney laird if I can. Dined at home quiet with Lady S. and Anne.

I was obliged to give this up in consequence of my own misfortunes.

'*November* 28.—People make me the oddest requests. It is not unusual for an Oxonian or Cantab, who has outrun his allowance, and of whom I know nothing, to apply to me for the loan of £20, £50, or £100. A captain of the Danish naval service writes to me, that being in distress for a sum of money by which he might

transport himself to Columbia to offer his services in assisting to free that province, he had dreamed I generously made him a present of it. I can tell him his dream by contraries. I begin to find, like Joseph Surface, that too good a character is inconvenient. I don't know what I have done to gain so much credit for generosity, but I suspect I owe it to being supposed, as Puff says, one of "those whom Heaven has blessed with affluence." Not too much of that neither, my dear petitioners, though I may thank myself that your ideas are not correct.

'Dined at Melville Castle, whither I went through a snowstorm. I was glad to find myself once more in a place connected with many happy days. Met Sir R. Dundas and my old friend George, now Lord Abercromby, with his Lady, and a beautiful girl his daughter. He is what he always was, the best-humoured man living; and our meetings, now more rare than formerly, are seasoned with many a recollection of old frolics and old friends.—I am entertained to see him just the same he has always been, never yielding up his own opinion in fact, and yet in words acquiescing in all that could be said against it. George was always like a willow—he never offered resistance to the breath of argument, but never moved from his rooted opinion, blow as it listed.—Exaggeration might make these peculiarities highly dramatic: Conceive a man who always seems to be acquiescing in your sentiments, yet never changes his own, and this with a sort of *bonhomie* which shows there is not a particle of deceit intended. He is only desirous to spare you the trouble of contradiction.

'*November* 29.—Dined at Justice-Clerk's—the President—Captain Smollett of Bonhill—our new Commander-in-Chief, Hon. Sir Robert O'Callaghan, brother to Earl of Lismore, a fine soldier-like man, with orders and badges;—also his younger brother, an agreeable man, whom I met at Lowther Castle this season. He composes his own music and sings his own poetry—has much humour, enhanced by a strong touch of national dialect,

which is always a rich sauce to an Irishman's good things. Dandyish, but not offensively; and seems to have a warm feeling for the credit of his country—rather inconsistent with the trifling and selfish quietude of a mere man of society.

'*November* 30.—I am come to the time when "those that look out of the windows shall be darkened." I must now wear spectacles constantly in reading and writing, though till this winter I have made a shift by using only their occasional assistance. Although my health cannot be better, I feel my lameness becomes sometimes painful, and often inconvenient. Walking on the pavement or causeway gives me trouble, and I am glad when I have accomplished my return on foot from the Parliament House to Castle Street, though I can (taking a competent time, as old *Braxie* said on another occasion) walk five or six miles in the country with pleasure. Well, such things must come, and be received with cheerful submission. My early lameness considered, it was impossible for a man to have been stronger or more active than I have been, and that for twenty or thirty years. Seams will slit, and elbows will out, quoth the tailor; and as I was fifty-four 15th August last, my mental vestments are none of the newest. Then Walter, Charles, and Lockhart are as active and handsome young fellows as you can see; and while they enjoy strength and activity I can hardly be said to want it. I have perhaps all my life set an undue value on these gifts. Yet it does appear to me that high and independent feelings are naturally, though not uniformly or inseparably, connected with bodily advantages. Strong men are usually good-humoured, and active men often display the same elasticity of mind as of body. These superiorities, indeed, are often misused. But, even for these things, God shall call us to judgment.

'Some months since, I joined with other literary folks in subscribing a petition for a pension to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, which we thought was a tribute merited by her as an authoress; and, in my opinion, much more by the

firmness and elasticity of mind with which she had borne a succession of great domestic calamities. Unhappily there was only about £100 open on the pension list, and this the ministers assigned in equal portions to Mrs. G—— and a distressed lady, grand-daughter of a forfeited Scottish nobleman. Mrs. G——, proud as a Highland-woman, vain as a poetess, and absurd as a blue-stocking, has taken this partition in *malam partem*, and written to Lord Melville about her merits, and that her friends do not consider her claims as being fairly canvassed, with something like a demand that her petition be submitted to the King. This is not the way to make her *plack* a *bawbee*, and Lord M., a little *miffed* in turn, sends the whole correspondence to me, to know whether Mrs. G—— will accept the £50 or not. Now, hating to deal with ladies when they are in an unreasonable humour, I have got the good-humoured Man of Feeling to find out the lady's mind, and I take on myself the task of making her peace with Lord M. There is no great doubt how it will end, for your scornful dog will always eat your dirty pudding. After all, the poor lady is greatly to be pitied; —her sole remaining daughter deep and far gone in a decline.

'Dined with my cousin, Robert Rutherford, being the first invitation since my uncle's death, and our cousin Lieutenant-Colonel Russell[1] of Ashestiel, with his sister Anne—the former newly returned from India—a fine gallant fellow, and distinguished as a cavalry officer. He came over-land from India, and has observed a good deal. Knight Marischal not well, so unable to attend the convocation of kith and kin.

'*December 1st.*—Colonel Russell told me that the European Government had discovered an ingenious mode of diminishing the number of burnings of widows. It seems the Shaster positively enjoins that the pile shall be so constructed that, if the victim should repent even at the moment when it is set on fire, she may still have the

[1] Now Major-General Sir James Russell, K.C.B.

means of saving herself. The Brahmins soon found it was necessary to assist the resolution of the sufferers, by means of a little pit into which they contrive to let the poor widow sink, so as to prevent her reaping any benefit from a late repentance. But the Government has brought them back to the regard of this law, and only permit the burning to go on when the pile is constructed with full opportunity of a *locus penitentiæ*. Yet the widow is so degraded if she dare to survive, that the number of burnings is still great. The quantity of female children destroyed by the Rajapout tribes, Colonel R. describes as very great indeed. They are strangled by the mother. The principle is the aristocratic pride of these high castes, who breed up no more daughters than they can reasonably hope to find matches for in their own rank. Singular how artificial systems of feeling can be made to overcome that love of offspring which seems instinctive in the females, not of the human race only, but of the lower animals. This is the reverse of our system of increasing game by shooting the old cock birds. It is a system would aid Malthus rarely.

'I think this journal will suit me well: if I can wax myself into an idea that it is purely voluntary, it may go on—*nulla dies sine linea*. But never a being hated task-work as I hate it, from my infancy upwards, and yet I have done a great deal in my day. It is not that I am idle in my nature neither. But propose to me to do one thing, and it is inconceivable the desire I have to do something else—not that it is more easy or more pleasant, but just because it is escaping from an imposed task. I cannot trace this love of contradiction to any distinct source, but it has haunted me all my life. I could almost suppose it was mechanical, and that the imposition of a piece of duty-labour operated on me like the mace of a bad billiard player, which gives an impulse to the ball indeed, but sends it off at a tangent different from the course designed. Now, if I expend such eccentric movements on this journal, it will be turning a wretched propensity to some tolerable account. If I had thus employed the hours and half-hours

which I have whiled away in putting off something that must needs be done at last, my conscience! I should have had a journal with a witness. Sophia and Lockhart came to Edinburgh to-day, and dined with us, meeting Hector Macdonald Buchanan, his Lady, and Missie, James Skene and his Lady, Lockhart's friend Cay, etc. They are lucky to be able to assemble so many real friends, whose good wishes I am sure will follow them in their new undertaking.

'*December* 2.—Rather a blank day for the *Gurnal.* Sophia dined with us alone, Lockhart being gone to the west to bid farewell to his father and brothers. Evening spent in talking with Sophia on their future prospects. God bless her, poor girl, she never gave me a moment's reason to complain of her. But, O my God, that poor delicate child, so clever, so animated, yet holding by this earth with so fearfully slight a tenure. Never out of his mother's thoughts, almost never out of his father's arms when he has but a single moment to give to anything. *Deus providebit.*

'*December* 3.—T. S. called last night to excuse himself from dining with Lockhart's friends to-day. I really fear he is near an actual standstill. He has been extremely improvident. When I first knew him he had an excellent estate, and now he is deprived, I fear, of the whole reversion of the price, and this from no vice or extreme, except a wasteful mode of buying pictures and other costly trifles at high prices, and selling them again for nothing, besides extravagant housekeeping and profuse hospitality. An excellent disposition, with a considerable fund of acquired knowledge, would have rendered him an agreeable companion, had he not affected singularity, and rendered himself accordingly singularly affected. He was very near being a poet, but a miss is as good as a mile. I knew him first, many years ago, when he was desirous of my acquaintance, but he was too poetical for me, or I was not poetical enough for him, so that we continued only

ordinary acquaintance, with good-will on either side, which T. S. really deserves, as a more friendly generous creature never lived. Lockhart hopes to get something done for him, being sincerely attached to him, but says he has no hopes till he is utterly ruined. That point, I fear, is not far distant; but what Lockhart can do for him *then*, I cannot guess. His last effort failed, owing to a curious reason. T. S. had made some translations, which he does extremely well—for give him ideas, and he never wants choice of good words—and Lockhart had got Constable to offer some sort of terms for them. T. S. had always, though possessing a beautiful power of handwriting, had some whim or other about imitating that of some other person, and has written for months in the imitation of one or other of his friends. At present he has renounced this amusement, and chooses to write with a brush upon large cartridge paper, somewhat in the Chinese fashion,—so when his work, which was only to extend to one or two volumes, arrived on the shoulders of two porters, in immense bales, our jolly bibliopole backed out of the treaty, and would have nothing more to do with T. S. He is a creature that is, or would be thought, of imagination all compact, and is influenced by strange whims. But he is a kind, harmless, friendly soul, and I fear has been cruelly plundered of money, which he now wants sadly.

'Dined with Lockhart's friends, about fifty in number, who gave him a parting entertainment: John Hope, Solicitor-General, in the chair, and Robert Dundas croupier. The company most highly respectable, and any man might be proud of such an indication of the interest they take in his progress in life. Tory principles rather too violently upheld by some speakers. I came home about ten; the party sat late.

'*December 5th.*—This morning Lockhart and Sophia left us early, and without leave-taking; when I rose at eight o'clock, they were *gone*. This was very right. I hate red eyes and blowing of noses. *Agere et pati Romanum est.* Of all schools, commend me to the Stoics. We

cannot indeed overcome our affections, nor ought we if we could, but we may repress them within due bounds, and avoid coaxing them to make fools of those who should be their masters. I have lost some of the comforts to which I chiefly looked for enjoyment. Well, I must make the more of such as remain—God bless them. And so "I will unto my holy work again,"[1] which at present is the description of that worshipful triumvirate, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

'I cannot conceive what possesses me, over every person besides, to mislay papers. I received a letter Saturday at *e'en*, enclosing a bill for £750; *no deaf nuts*. Well, I read it, and note the contents; and this day, as if it had been a wind-bill in the literal sense of the words, I search everywhere, and lose three hours of my morning—turn over all my confusion in the writing-desk—break open one or two letters, lest I should have enclosed the sweet and quickly convertible document in them,—send for a joiner, and disorganize my scrutoire, lest it should have fallen aside by mistake. I find it at last—the place where is of little consequence; but this trick must be amended.

'Dined at the Royal Society Club, where, as usual, was a pleasant meeting—from twenty to twenty-five. It is a very good institution; we pay two guineas only for six dinners in the year, present or absent. Dine at five, or rather half-past five, at the Royal Hotel, where we have an excellent dinner, with soups, fish, etc., and all in good order; port and sherry till half-past seven, then coffee, and we go to the Society. This preface of a good dinner, to be paid for whether you partake or not, brings out many a philosopher who might not otherwise have attended. Harry Mackenzie, now in his eighty-second or third year, read part of an Essay on Dreams. Supped at Dr. Russell's usual party, which shall serve for one while.

'*December 6th.*—A rare thing this literature, or love of fame or notoriety which accompanies it. Here is Mr. Henry Mackenzie on the very brink of human dissolution,

[1] King Richard III. Act III. Scene 7.

as actively anxious about it as if the curtain must not soon be closed on that and everything else.[1] He calls me his literary confessor; and I am sure I am glad to return the kindnesses which he showed me long since in George Square. No man is less known from his writings; you would suppose a retired, modest, somewhat affected man, with a white handkerchief, and a sigh ready for every sentiment. No such thing: H. M. is alert as a contracting tailor's needle in every sort of business—a politician and a sportsman—shoots and fishes in a sort even to this day—and is the life of company with anecdotes and fun. Sometimes his daughter tells me he is in low spirits at home, but really I never see anything of it in society.

'There is a maxim almost universal in Scotland, which I should like much to see controlled. Every youth, of every temper and almost every description of character, is sent either to study for the bar, or to a writer's office as an apprentice. The Scottish seem to conceive Themis the most powerful of goddesses. Is a lad stupid, the law will sharpen him;—is he mercurial, the law will make him sedate;—has he an estate, he may get a sheriffdom;—is he poor, the richest lawyers have emerged from poverty;—is he a Tory, he may become a depute-advocate;—is he a Whig, he may with far better hope expect to become, in reputation at least, that rising counsel Mr. ——, when in fact he only rises at tavern dinners. Upon some such wild views, advocates and writers multiply till there is no life for them, and men give up the chase, hopeless and exhausted, and go into the army at five-and-twenty, instead of eighteen, with a turn for expense perhaps—almost certainly for profligacy, and with a heart embittered against the loving parents or friends who compelled them to lose six or seven years in dusting the rails of the stair with their black gowns, or scribbling nonsense for twopence a page all day, and laying out twice their earnings at night in whisky-punch. Here is T. L. now. Four or five years ago, from certain indications, I assured his

[1] Mr. Mackenzie had been consulting Sir Walter about collecting his own juvenile poetry.

friends he would never be a writer. Good-natured lad, too, when Bacchus is out of the question; but at other times so pugnacious, that it was wished he could only be properly placed where fighting was to be a part of his duty, regulated by time and place, and paid for accordingly. Well, time and instruction have been thrown away, and now, after fighting two regular boxing-matches and a duel with pistols in the course of one week, he tells them roundly *he will be no* writer, which common-sense might have told them before. He has now perhaps acquired habits of insubordination, unfitting him for the army, where he might have been tamed at an earlier period. He is too old for the navy, and so he must go to India, a guinea-pig on board a Chinaman, with what hope or view it is melancholy to guess. His elder brother did all man could to get his friends to consent to his going into the army in time. The lad has good-humour, courage, and most gentleman-like feelings, but he is incurably dissipated, I fear; so goes to die in a foreign land. Thank God, I let Walter take his own way; and I trust he will be a useful, honoured soldier, being, for his time, high in the service; whereas at home he would probably have been a wine-bibbing, moor-fowl shooting, fox-hunting Fife squire—living at Lochore without either aim or end—and well if he were no worse. Dined at home with Lady S. and Anne. Wrote in the evening.

'*December 7th.* — Teind day — at home of course. Wrote answers to one or two letters which have been lying on my desk like snakes, hissing at me for my dilatoriness. Received a letter from Sir W. Knighton, mentioning that the King acquiesced in my proposal that Constable's Miscellany should be dedicated to him. Enjoined, however, not to make this public, till the draft of dedication shall be approved. This letter tarried so long, I thought some one had insinuated the proposal was *infra dig.* I don't think so. The purpose is to bring all the standard works, both in sciences and the liberal arts, within the reach of the lower classes, and enable

them thus to use with advantage the education which is given them at every hand. To make boys learn to read, and then place no good books within their reach, is to give men an appetite, and leave nothing in the pantry save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve. Sir William, it seems, has been in Germany.

'Mighty dark this morning: it is past ten, and I am using my lamp. The vast number of houses built beneath us to the north certainly renders our street darker during the days in which frost or haze prevents the smoke from rising. After all, it may be my older eyes. I remember two years ago, when Lord Hermand began to fail somewhat in his limbs, he observed that Lord Succoth came to court at a more early hour than usual, whereas it was he himself who took longer time to walk the usual distance betwixt his house and the Parliament Square. I suspect old gentlemen often make these mistakes.

'Dined quiet with Lady S—— and Anne. Anne is practising Scots songs, which I take as a kind compliment to my own taste, as hers leads her chiefly to foreign music. I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and always have made, the most pleasing impression on me. And so if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say, in requital, God bless her.

'I have much to comfort me in the present aspect of my family. My eldest son, independent in fortune, united to an affectionate wife—and of good hopes in his profession;—my second, with a good deal of talent, and in the way, I trust, of cultivating it to good purpose. Anne, an honest, downright good Scots lass, in whom I could only wish to correct a spirit of satire; and Lockhart is Lockhart, to whom I can most willingly confide the happiness of the daughter who chose him, and whom he has chosen. But my dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes, is, I fear, frail in health—though I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this

troublesome complaint goes on—it bodes no long existence. My brother was affected with the same weakness, which, before he was fifty, brought on mortal symptoms. The poor Major had been rather a free liver. But my father, the most abstemious of men, save when the duties of hospitality required him to be very moderately free with his bottle, and that was very seldom, had the same weakness of the powers of retention which now annoys me, and he, I think, was not above seventy when cut off. Square the odds, and good-night Sir Walter about sixty. —I care not, if I leave my name unstained, and my family properly settled—*Sat est vixisse.*

'*December* 8.—Talking of the *vixisse*, it may not be impertinent to notice that Knox, a young poet of considerable talent, died here a week or two since. His father was a respectable yeoman, and he himself, succeeding to good farms under the Duke of Buccleuch, became too soon his own master, and plunged into dissipation and ruin. His talent then showed itself in a fine strain of pensive poetry, called, I think, "The Lonely Hearth,"[1] far superior to that of Michael Bruce, whose *consumption*, by the way, has been the *life* of his verses. But poetry, nay good poetry, is a drug in the present day. I am a wretched patron—I cannot go about with a subscription-paper, like a pocket-pistol, and draw unawares on some honest country-gentleman, who has as much alarm as if I had used the phrase "stand and deliver," and parts with his money with a grimace, indicating some suspicion that the crown-piece thus levied goes ultimately into the collector's own pocket. This I see daily done; and I have seen such collectors, when they have exhausted papa and mamma, continue their trade among the misses, and conjure out of their pockets their little funds which should

[1] William Knox died 12th November. He had published 'Songs of Israel, 1824'; 'A Visit to Dublin, 1824'; 'The Harp of Zion, 1825,' etc.; besides the 'Lonely Hearth.' His publisher (Mr. Anderson junior, of Edinburgh) remembers that Sir Walter occasionally wrote to Knox, and sent him money; £10 at a time.

carry them to a play or an assembly. It is well people will go through this—it does some good, I suppose, and they have great merit who can sacrifice their pride so far as to attempt it in this way. For my part I am a bad promoter of subscriptions; but I wished to do what I could for this lad, whose talent I really admired; and I am not addicted to admire heaven-born poets, or poetry that is reckoned very good *considering*. I had him, Knox, at Abbotsford, about ten years ago, but found him unfit for that sort of society. I tried to help him, but there were temptations he could never resist. He scrambled on writing for the booksellers and magazines, and living like the Otways, and Savages, and Chattertons of former days, though I do not know that he was in extreme want. His connexion with me terminated in begging a subscription or a guinea, now and then. His last works were spiritual hymns, and which he wrote very well. In his own line of society he was said to exhibit infinite humour; but all his works are grave and pensive —a style, perhaps, like Master Stephen's melancholy, affected for the nonce.

'Mrs. Grant intimates that she will take her pudding —her pension, I mean (see 30th November), and is contrite, as Henry Mackenzie vouches. I am glad the stout old girl is not foreclosed, faith. Cabbing a pension in these times is like hunting a pig with a soap'd tail, monstrous apt to slip through your fingers.

'*December* 9.—Yesterday I read and wrote the whole day and evening. To-day I shall not be so happy. Having Gas-Light Company to attend at two, I must be brief in journalizing.

'The gay world has been kept in hot water lately by the impudent publication of the celebrated Harriet Wilson —who, punk from earliest possibility, I suppose, has lived with half the gay world at hack and manger, and now obliges such as will not pay hush-money with a history of whatever she knows or can invent about them. She must have been assisted in the style, spelling, and

diction, though the attempt at wit is very poor, that at pathos sickening. But there is some good retailing of conversations, in which the style of the speakers, so far as known to me, is exactly imitated, and some things told, as said by individuals of each other, which will sound unpleasantly in each other's ears. I admire the address of Lord A——, himself very sorrily handled from time to time. Some one asked him if H. W. had been pretty correct on the whole. "Why, faith," he replied, "I believe so" — when, raising his eyes, he saw Q—— D——, whom the little jilt had treated atrociously — "what concerns the present company always excepted, you know," added Lord A——, with infinite presence of mind. As he was in *pari casu* with Q. D., no more could be said. After all, H. W. beats Con Philips, Anne Bellamy, and all former demireps, out and out. I think I supped once in her company, more than twenty years since, at Mat Lewis's in Argyle Street, where the company, as the Duke says to Lucio, chanced to be "fairer than honest."[1] She was far from beautiful, if it be the same *chiffonne*, but a smart saucy girl, with good eyes and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy. I am glad this accidental meeting has escaped her memory — or, perhaps, is not accurately recorded in mine — for being a sort of French falconer, who hawk at all they see, I might have had a distinction which I am far from desiring.

'Dined at Sir John Hay's—a large party. In the morning a meeting of Oil Gas Committee. The concern hangs a little;

> It may do weel, for aught it's done yet,
> But only—it's no just begun yet.[2]

'*December* 10.—A stormy and rainy day.—Walk it from the Court through the rain. I don't dislike this. Egad, I rather like it; for no man that ever stepped on heather has less dread than I of the catch cold; and I

[1] Measure for Measure, Act IV. Scene 3.
[2] Burns's Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.

seem to regain, in buffeting with the wind, a little of the high spirit with which, in younger days, I used to enjoy a Tam o' Shanter ride through darkness, wind, and rain, the boughs groaning and cracking over my head, the good horse free to the road and impatient for home, and feeling the weather as little as I did.

> The storm around might roar and rustle,
> We didna mind the storm a whistle.

'Answered two letters: one answer to a schoolboy, who writes himself Captain of Giggleswick School (a most imposing title), entreating the youngster not to commence editor of a magazine to be entitled the Yorkshire Muffin, I think, at seventeen years old—second, to a soldier of the 79th, showing why I cannot oblige him by getting his discharge, and exhorting him rather to bear with the wickedness and profanity of the service, than take the very precarious step of desertion. This is the old receipt of Durandarte — *Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards;* and I suppose the correspondents will think I have been too busy in offering my counsel where I was asked for assistance.

'A third rogue writes to tell me—rather of the latest, if the matter was of consequence—that he approves of the first three volumes of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, but totally condemns the fourth. Doubtless he thinks his opinion worth the sevenpence sterling which his letter costs. However, an author should be reasonably well pleased when three-fourths of his work are acceptable to the reader. The knave demands of me, in a postscript, to get back the sword of Sir William Wallace from England, where it was carried from Dumbarton Castle. I am not Master-General of the Ordnance, that I know. It was wrong, however, to take away that and Mons Meg. If I go to London this spring, I will renew my negotiation with the Great Duke for recovery of Mons Meg.

'There is nothing more awful than to attempt to cast a glance among the clouds and mists which hide the

broken extremity of the celebrated bridge of Mirza.[1] Yet, when every day brings us nigher that termination, one would almost think our views should become clearer. Alas! it is not so: there is a curtain to be withdrawn, a veil to be rent, before we shall see things as they really are. There are few, I trust, who disbelieve the existence of a God; nay, I doubt if at all times, and in all moods, any single individual ever adopted that hideous creed, though some have professed it. With the belief of a Deity, that of the immortality of the soul and of the state of future rewards and punishments is indissolubly linked. More we are not to know; but neither are we prohibited from all attempts, however vain, to pierce the solemn sacred gloom. The expressions used in Scripture are doubtless metaphorical, for penal fires and heavenly melody are only applicable to beings endowed with corporeal senses; and, at least till the period of the resurrection, the spirits of men, whether entering into the perfection of the just, or committed to the regions of punishment, are not connected with bodies. Neither is it to be supposed that the glorified bodies which shall arise in the last day will be capable of the same gross indulgences with which ours are now solaced. That the idea of Mahomet's paradise is inconsistent with the purity of our heavenly religion will be readily granted; and see Mark xii. 25. Harmony is obviously chosen as the least corporeal of all gratifications of the sense, and as the type of love, unity, and a state of peace and perfect happiness. But they have a poor idea of the Deity, and the rewards which are destined for the just made perfect, who can only adopt the literal sense of an eternal concert—a never-ending birthday ode. I rather suppose this should be understood as some commission from the Highest, some duty to discharge with the applause of a satisfied conscience. That the Deity, who himself must be supposed to feel love and affection for the beings he has called into existence, should delegate a portion of those powers, I for one cannot conceive altogether so wrong a conjecture.

[1] Spectator, No. 159.

We would then find reality in Milton's sublime machinery of the guardian saints or genii of kingdoms. Nay, we would approach to the Catholic idea of the employment of saints, though without approaching the absurdity of saint-worship, which degrades their religion. There would be, we must suppose, in these employments difficulties to overcome, and exertions to be made, for all which the celestial beings employed would have certain appropriate powers. I cannot help owning that a life of active benevolence is more consistent with my ideas than an eternity of music. But it is all speculation, and it is impossible to guess what we shall do, unless we could ascertain the equally difficult previous question, what we are to be. But there is a God, and a just God—a judgment and a future life—and all who own so much, let them act according to the faith that is in them. I would not of course limit the range of my genii to this confined earth. There is the universe with all its endless extent of worlds.

'Company at home—Sir Adam Fergusson and his Lady; Colonel and Miss Russell; Count Davidoff, and Mr. Collyer. By the by, I observe that all men whose names are obviously derived from some mechanical trade, endeavour to disguise and antiquate, as it were, their names, by spelling them after some quaint manner or other. Thus we have Collyer, Smythe, Tailleure; as much as to say, my ancestor was indeed a mechanic, but it was a world of time ago, when the word was spelled very unlike the modern usage.—Then we had young Whitebank and Will Allan the artist, a very agreeable, simple-mannered, and pleasant man.

'*December* 11.—A touch of the *morbus eruditorum*, to which I am as little subject as most folks, and have it less now than when young. It is a tremor of the head, the pulsation of which becomes painfully sensible—a disposition to causeless alarm—much lassitude—and decay of vigour and activity of intellect. The reins feel weary and painful, and the mind is apt to receive and encourage gloomy apprehensions. Fighting with this fiend is not always the

best way to conquer him. I have found exercise and the open air better than reasoning. But such weather as is now without doors does not encourage *la petite guerre*, so we must give him battle in form, by letting both mind and body know that, supposing one the House of Commons and the other the House of Peers, my will is sovereign over both. There is a fine description of this species of mental weakness in the fine play of Beaumont and Fletcher, called the Lover's Progress, where the man, warned that his death is approaching, works himself into an agony of fear, and calls for assistance, though there is no apparent danger. The apparition of the innkeeper's ghost, in the same play, hovers between the ludicrous and the terrible; and to me the touches of the former quality which it contains, seem to augment the effect of the latter —they seem to give reality to the supernatural, as being a circumstance with which an inventor would hardly have garnished his story.

'*December* 12.—Hogg came to breakfast this morning, and brought for his companion the Galashiels bard, David Thomson,[1] as to a meeting of *huz Tividale poets*. The honest grunter opines, with a delightful *naïveté*, that *Muir's* verses are far owre sweet—answered by Thomson that Moore's ear or notes, I forget which, were finely strung. "They are far owre finely strung," replied he of the Forest, "for mine are just right." It reminded me of Queen Bess, when questioning Melville sharply and closely whether Mary was taller than her, and extracting an answer in the affirmative, she replied— "Then your Queen is too tall, for I am just the proper height."

'Was engaged the whole day with Sheriff-court processes. There is something sickening in seeing poor devils drawn into great expenses about trifles by interested attorneys. But too cheap access to litigation has its evils on the other hand, for the proneness of the lower class to gratify spite and revenge in this way would be a dreadful

[1] See *ante*, p. 63.

evil were they able to endure the expense. Very few cases come before the Sheriff-court of Selkirkshire that ought to come anywhere. Wretched wranglings about a few pounds, begun in spleen, and carried on from obstinacy, and at length, from fear of the conclusion to the banquet of ill-humour, "D—n—n of expenses."[1] I try to check it as well as I can; "but so't will be when I am gone."

'*December* 12.—Dined at home, and spent the evening in writing—Anne and Lady Scott at the theatre to see Mathews;—a very clever man my friend Mathews; but it is tiresome to be funny for a whole evening, so I was content and stupid at home.

'An odd optical delusion has amused me these two last nights. I have been of late, for the first time, condemned to the constant use of spectacles. Now, when I have laid them aside to step into a room dimly lighted, out of the strong light which I use for writing, I have seen, or seemed to see, through the rims of the same spectacles which I have left behind me. At first the impression was so lively, that I put my hands to my eyes, believing I had the actual spectacles on at the moment. But what I saw was only the eidolon or image of said useful servants. This fortifies some of Dr. Hibbert's positions about spectral appearances.

'*December* 13.—Letter from Lady Stafford—kind and friendly, after the wont of Banzu-Mohr-ar-chat.[2] This is wrong spelled, I know. Her countenance is something for Sophia, whose company should be, as ladies are said to choose their liquor—little and good. To be acquainted with persons of mere *ton*, is a nuisance and a

[1] Burns's Address to the Unco Guid.

[2] *Banamhorar-Chat, i.e.* the Great Lady of the Cat, is the Gaelic title of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland. The County of Sutherland itself is in that dialect *Cattey*, and in the English name of the neighbouring one, *Caithness*, we have another trace of the early settlement of the *Clan Chattan;* whose chiefs bear the cognizance of a Wild Cat. [The Duchess-Countess died in 1838.]

scrape—to be known to persons of real fashion and fortune, is in London a very great advantage. In London, second-rate fashion is like false jewels.

'Went to the yearly court of the Edinburgh Assurance Company, to which I am one of those graceful and useless appendages, called Directors Extraordinary—an extraordinary director I should prove, had they elected me an ordinary one. There were there moneyers and great oneyers,[1] men of metal—counters and discounters—sharp, grim, prudential faces—eyes weak with ciphering by lamplight—men who say to gold, Be thou paper, and to paper, Be thou turned into fine gold. Many a bustling, sharp-faced, keen-eyed writer too—some perhaps speculating with their clients' property. My reverend seigniors had expected a motion for printing their contract, which I, as a piece of light artillery, was brought down and got into battery to oppose. I should certainly have done this on the general ground, that while each person could at any time obtain sight of the contract at a call on the directors or managers, it would be absurd to print it for the use of the company—and that exposing it to the eyes of the world at large was in all respects unnecessary, and might teach novel companies to avail themselves of our rules and calculations—if false, for the purpose of exposing our errors—if correct, for the purpose of improving their own schemes on our model. But my eloquence was not required, no one renewing the motion under question; so off I came, my ears still ringing with the sounds of thousands and tens of thousands, and my eyes dazzled with the golden gleam offered by so many capitalists.

'Walked home with the Solicitor[2]—decidedly the most hopeful young man of his time; high connexions, great talent, spirited ambition, a ready elocution, with a good voice and dignified manners, prompt and steady courage, vigilant and constant assiduity, popularity with

[1] See 1st King Henry IV. Act II. Scene 1.

[2] John Hope, Esq. (now Dean of the Faculty of Advocates) was at this time Solicitor-General for Scotland.

the young men, and the good opinion of the old, will, if I mistake not, carry him as high as any man who has arisen here since the days of old Hal Dundas.[1] He is hot though, and rather hasty: this should be amended. They who would play at single-stick must bear with pleasure a rap over the knuckles. Dined quietly with Lady Scott and Anne.

'*December* 14.—Affairs very bad again in the money-market in London. It must come here, and I have far too many engagements not to feel it. To end the matter at once, I intend to borrow £10,000, with which my son's marriage-contract allows me to charge my estate. This will enable us to dispense in a great measure with bank assistance, and sleep in spite of thunder. I do not know why it is—this business makes me a little bilious, or rather the want of exercise during the Session, and this late change of the weather to too much heat. But the sun and moon shall dance on the green ere carelessness or hope of gain, or facility of getting cash, shall make me go too deep again, were it but for the disquiet of the thing.

'*December* 15.—Dined at home with family. I am determined not to stand mine host to all Scotland and England as I have done. This shall be a saving, as it must be a borrowing year. We heard from Sophia; they are got safe to town; but as Johnnie had a little bag of meal with him, to make his porridge on the road, the whole inn-yard assembled to see the operation. Junor, his maid, was of opinion that England was an "awfu' country to make parritch in." God bless the poor baby, and restore his perfect health!

'*December* 16.—T. S. and his friend Robert Wilson[2] came—the former at four, as usual—the latter at three, as

[1] Henry Dundas, the first Viscount Melville, first appeared in Parliament as Lord Advocate of Scotland.

[2] Robert Sym Wilson, Esq., W.S., Secretary to the Royal Bank of Scotland.

appointed. Robert Wilson frankly said that T. S.'s case was quite desperate, that he was insolvent, and that any attempt to save him at present would be just so much cash thrown away. God knows, at this moment I have none to throw away uselessly. For poor S., there was a melancholy mixture of pathos and affectation in his statement, which really affected me; while it told me that it would be useless to help him to money on such very empty plans. I endeavoured to persuade him to make a virtue of necessity, resign all to his creditors, and begin the world on a new leaf. I offered him Chiefswood for a temporary retirement. Lady Scott thinks I was wrong, and nobody could less desire such a neighbour, all his affectations being *caviare* to me. But then the wife and children!—Went again to the Solicitor on a wrong night, being asked for to-morrow. Lady Scott undertakes to keep my engagements recorded in future. "Sed quis custodiet ipsam custodem?"

'*December* 17.—Dined with the Solicitor—Lord Chief-Baron—Sir William Boothby, nephew of old Sir Brook, the dandy poet, etc. Annoyed with anxious presentiments, which the night's post must dispel or confirm.

'*December* 18.—Poor T. S. called again yesterday. Through his incoherent, miserable tale, I could see that he had exhausted each access to credit, and yet fondly imagines that, bereft of all his accustomed indulgences, he can work with a literary zeal unknown to his happier days. I hope he may labour enough to gain the mere support of his family. For myself, if things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs, and purchasing such

wastes; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

> Fountain heads, and pathless groves;
> Places which pale passion loves.

This cannot be; but I may work substantial husbandry, *i.e.* write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm; at least I much doubt, the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation:

> While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,
> The high-mettled racer's a hack on the road.

It is a bitter thought; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created. There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.

'What a life mine has been!—half educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time; getting forward, and held a bold and a clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer; broken-hearted for two years; my heart handsomely pieced again; but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come:) because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows; and so ends the catechism.

'Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my inten-

tions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest?—how live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy—the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things, I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees. I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, "Poor gentleman"—"a well-meaning man"—"nobody's enemy but his own"—"thought his parts would never wear out"—"family poorly left"—"pity he took that foolish title." Who can answer this question?

'Poor Will Laidlaw—poor Tom Purdie—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

'Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all—all is in the balance. He will have the Journal still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They*—alas, who will *they* be—the *unbekannten Obern*[1] who may have to dispose of my all

[1] *Unbekannten Obern*—unknown rulers.

as they will? Some hard-eyed banker—some of these men of millions whom I described.

'I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes—partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell—but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind.

'Oddly enough, it happened mine honest friend Hector Macdonald came in before dinner, to ask a copy of my seal of arms, with a sly kindliness of intimation that it was for some agreeable purpose. *Half-past eight.* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin. I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honourably, in a mercantile sense. Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm.

'I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because "his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings,"[1] but because he showed feeling—deep feeling, poor fellow. He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon—I will not forget this, if all keeps right. I love the virtues of rough-and-round men—the others' are apt to escape in salt rheum, sal-volatile, and a white pocket-handkerchief.

'*December* 19.—Ballantyne here before breakfast. He looks on last night's news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock. He talks of going to London next week. But I must go to work.

[1] Isaiah lii. 7.

'*December* 20.—Dined at Lord Chief-Baron's. Lord Justice-Clerk; Lord President; Captain Scarlett, a gentlemanlike young man, the son of the great Counsellor,[1] and a friend of my son Walter; Lady Charlotte Hope and other womankind; R. Dundas of Arniston, and his pleasant and good-humoured little wife, whose quick, intelligent look pleases me more, though her face be plain, than a hundred mechanical beauties. I like Ch. Ba. Shepherd very much—as much, I think, as any man I have learned to know of late years. There is a neatness and precision, a closeness and truth in the tone of his conversation, which shows what a lawyer he must have been. Perfect good-humour and *naïveté* of manner, with a little warmth of temper on suitable occasions. His great deafness alone prevented him from being Lord Chief-Justice. I never saw a man so patient under such a malady. He loves society, and converses excellently, yet is often obliged, in a mixed company particularly, to lay aside his trumpet, retire into himself, and withdraw from the talk. He does this with an expression of patience in his countenance which touches one much. Constable's licence for the Dedication is come, which will make him happy.[2]

December 21*st*.—Dined with James Ballantyne, and met R. Cadell, and my old friend Mathews, the comedian, with his son, now grown up a clever lad, who makes songs in the style of James Smith or Colman, and sings them with spirit. There have been odd associations attending my two last meetings with Mathews. The last time I saw him before yesterday evening, he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week.[3] I never saw Sir Alexander more. The

[1] Mr. Scarlett, now Lord Abinger.

[2] The Dedication of Constable's Miscellany was penned by Sir Walter:—'To His Majesty King George IV., the most generous patron even of the most humble attempts towards the advantage of his subjects, This Miscellany, designed to extend useful knowledge and elegant literature, by placing works of standard merit within the attainment of every class of Readers, is most humbly inscribed by His Majesty's dutiful and devoted subject—Archibald Constable.'

[3] See *ante*, p. 22, and vol. iii. p. 528.

time before was in 1815, when John Scott of Gala and I were returning from France, and passed through London, when we brought Mathews down as far as Leamington. Poor Byron lunched, or rather made an early dinner with us at Long's, and a most brilliant day we had of it. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim: he was as playful as a kitten. Well I never saw him again.[1] So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I like better that he should throw in his talent of mimicry and humour into the present current tone of the company, than that he should be required to give this, that, and t'other *bit* selected from his public recitations. They are good certainly—excellent; but then you *must* laugh, and that is always severe to me. When I do laugh in sincerity, the joke must be or seem unpremeditated. I could not help thinking, in the midst of the glee, what gloom had lately been over the minds of three of the company. What a strange scene if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people's real minds!

> No eyes the rocks discover
> Which lurk beneath the deep.

Life could not be endured were it seen in reality. Things keep mending in London.

'*December* 22.—I wrote six of my close pages yesterday, which is about twenty-four pages in print. What is more, I think it comes off twangingly. The story is so very interesting in itself, that there is no fear of the book answering.[2] Superficial it must be, but I do not care for the charge. Better a superficial book which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull boring narrative, pausing to see farther into a millstone at every moment than the nature of the millstone admits. Nothing is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a *minute philosopher*, a botanist,

[1] See *ante*, vol. ii. pp. 514-518; vol. iii. p. 24.
[2] Life of Napoleon.

or pebble-gatherer, who is eternally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural picture to look at grasses and chucky-stones. Yet, in their way, they give useful information; and so does the minute historian. Gad, I think that will look well in the preface. My bile is quite gone; I really believe it arose from mere anxiety. What a wonderful connexion between the mind and body!

'The air of *Bonnie Dundee* running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the keynote from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688-9.[1] I wonder if they are good. Ah, poor Will Erskine! thou couldst and wouldst have told me. I must consult J. B., who is as honest as was W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big Bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free-will. I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over.

'Dined at Lord Minto's. There were Lord and Lady Ruthven, William Clerk, and Thomas Thomson,—a right choice party. There was also my very old friend Mrs. Brydone, the relict of the traveller, and daughter of Principal Robertson, and really worthy of such a connexion—Lady Minto, who is also peculiarly agreeable—and her sister, Mrs. Admiral Adam, in the evening.

'*December* 23.—Lord Minto's father, the first Earl, was a man among a thousand. I knew him very very intimately in the beginning of the century, and, which was very agreeable, was much at his house on very easy terms. He loved the Muses, and worshipped them in secret, and used to read some of his poetry, which was but middling. With the mildest manners, he was very tenacious of his opinions, although he changed them twice in the crises of politics. He was the early friend of Fox, and made a figure towards the end of the American war, or during the struggles betwixt Fox and Pitt. Then came the Revolution, and he joined the Anti-Gallican party so

[1] See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. xii. pp. 194-7.

keenly, that he declared against Addington's peace with France, and was for a time, I believe, a Wyndhamite. He was reconciled to the Whigs on the Fox and Grenville coalition; but I have heard that Fox, contrary to his wont, retained such personal feelings as made him object to Sir Gilbert Elliot's having a seat in the Cabinet; so he was sent Governor-General to India—a better thing, I take it, for his fortunes. He died shortly after his return,[1] on his way down to his native country. He was a most pleasing and amiable man. I was very sorry for his death, though I do not know how we should have met, for a contested election in Roxburghshire had placed some coldness betwixt the present Lord and me. I was certainly anxious for Sir Alexander Don, both as friend of my most kind friend Charles Duke of Buccleuch, and on political accounts; and those thwartings are what men in public life do not like to endure. After a cessation of friendship for some years, we have now come about again. We never had the slightest personal dispute or disagreement. But politics are the blowpipe beneath whose influence the best cemented friendships diffuse; and ours, after all, was only a very familiar acquaintance.

'It is very odd that the common people about Minto and the neighbourhood will not believe at this hour that the first Earl is dead. They think he had done something in India which he could not answer for—that the house was rebuilt on a scale unusually large to give him a suite of secret apartments, and that he often walks about the woods and crags of Minto at night, with a white nightcap and long white beard. The circumstance of his having died on the road down to Scotland is the sole foundation of this absurd legend, which shows how willing the public are to gull themselves when they can find no one else to take the trouble. I have seen people who could read, write, and cipher, shrug their shoulders and look mysterious when this subject was mentioned. One very absurd addition was made on occasion of a great ball at Minto House, which it was said was given to draw

[1] Gilbert, Earl of Minto, died in June 1814.

all people away from the grounds, that the concealed Earl might have leisure for his exercise. This was on the principle in the German play,[1] where, to hide their conspiracy, the associates join in a chorus song.

'We dined at home; Mr. Davidoff and his tutor kept an engagement with us to dinner, notwithstanding the death of the Emperor Alexander. They went to the play with the womankind; I stayed at home to write.

December 24.—Wrote to Walter and Jane, and gave the former an account of how things had been in the money market. Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the Author of Waverley in a superior style, at £1 : 1s. volume. He says he will answer for making £20,000 off this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits. I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work; yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing—besides the Printing Office. Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in. His rally has put me in mind of the old song—

> The tailor raise and shook his duds,
> He gar'd the BILLS flee aff in cluds,
> And they that staid gat fearfu' thuds—
> The tailor proved a man, O.

'We are for Abbotsford to-day, with a light heart.

'*December* 25, *Abbotsford.*—Arrived here last night at seven. Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful—*Barbarus has segetes? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.* There shall be no lack of wisdom. But come—*il faut cultiver notre jardin.*[2] Let us see, I shall write out the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee. I will sketch a preface to La Rochejacquelin for Constable's Miscellany, and try about a specimen of notes for the

[1] See Canning's 'German Play,' in the Anti-Jacobin.
[2] See Candide.

Waverley Novels. Together with letters and by-business, it will be a good day's work.

I make a vow,
And keep it true.

I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to-morrow, instead of Christmas Day. On this day of general devotion I have a particular call for gratitude!!'

CHAPTER LXVI

Constable in London—Extract from James Ballantyne's Memorandum—Scott's Diary resumed—Progress of Woodstock—Review of Pepys' Diary—Skene, Scrope, Mathews, etc.—Commercial alarms renewed at intervals—Catastrophe of the three houses of Hurst & Robinson, Constable, and Ballantyne.

JAN. AND FEB. 1826

IT was not till nearly three weeks after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph of his Diary, that Mr. Constable made his appearance in London. I saw him immediately. Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly; and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined him for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi—*reluctantem draconem.* A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I, for the first time, saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of *the Czar.* He looked, spoke, and gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted—open rebellion in twenty provinces—confusion in the capital—treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration; nor were such feelings mitigated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons

of whom I had never before heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be 'blown over' had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment, to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last; and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion; with hesitation offers a sum for it; obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off; but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his;* he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by anything in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man[1] who had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the Encyclopædia Britannica, with its supplement, a moiety of the Edinburgh Review, nearly all Scott's Poetry, the Waverley Novels, and the advancing Life of

[1] On seeing the passage in the text, Mr. Constable's surviving partner writes as follows:—'No better illustration of this buoyant idea of the value of literary property is to be found than in the now well-ascertained fact of Constable himself, in 1811, overestimating his partner, Mr. Hunter, *out* of the concern at the Cross to the tune of some £10,000 or £12,000—a blow from which the firm never recovered.—R. C.'

Napoleon—who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten—and who seriously viewed his plan of the new Miscellany as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune—what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction that he had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry 'sheafs' of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the *Author of Waverley*) in his application for a loan of from £100,000 to £200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me to interfere in such a business as this. Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would do alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow £20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter had, ere the message reached him, been made aware that his advances had already been continued in the absence of all ground for rational hope.

It is no business of mine to detail Constable's subsequent proceedings on this his last visit to London. Everywhere he found distrust. The metropolitan bankers had enough on their hands at a time when, as Mr. Huskisson afterwards confessed in Parliament, the Bank of England itself was on the verge of a stoppage, without embarrassing themselves with new securities of the uncertain and precarious nature of literary property. The great bookselling houses were all either labouring themselves, or watching

with fear and trembling the daily aggravated symptoms of distress among their friends and connexions. Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay.

Before that day came, I had necessarily been informed of the nature of Scott's connexion with commercial speculations; but I had not been prepared for the amount to which Constable's ruin must involve him, until the final blow was struck.

I believe I have now said enough by way of preface to Sir Walter's Diary from Christmas 1825, to the latter part of January 1826, when my darkest anticipations were more than realized. But before I return to this Diary, it may be well to transcribe the very short passage of James Ballantyne's deathbed memorandum which refers to this painful period. Mr. Ballantyne says, in that most candid paper:—

'I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far—"sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending—if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed.'

DIARY

'*Abbotsford, December* 26, 1825.—My God! what poor creatures we are! After all my fair proposals yesterday, I was seized with a most violent pain in the right kidney and parts adjacent, which forced me instantly to go to bed and send for Clarkson.[1] He came, enquired, and pronounced the complaint to be gravel augmented by bile. I was in great agony till about two o'clock, but awoke with the pain gone. I got up, had a fire in my dressing-closet, and had Dalgleish to shave me—two trifles, which I only mention, because they are contrary to my hardy and independent personal habits. But although a man cannot be a hero to his valet, his valet in sickness becomes of great use to him. I cannot expect that the first will be the last visit of this cruel complaint: but "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?"[2]

'*December* 27*th*.—Slept twelve hours at a stretch, being much exhausted. Totally without pain to-day, but uncomfortable from the effects of calomel, which, with me at least, is like the assistance of an auxiliary army, just one degree more tolerable than the enemy it chases away. Calomel contemplations are not worth recording. I wrote an introduction and a few notes to the Memoirs of Madame La Rochejacquelin,[3] being all that I was equal to. Sir Adam Fergusson came over and tried to marry my verses to the tune of Bonnie Dundee. They seem well adapted to each other. Dined with Lady S—— and Anne. Worked at Pepys in the evening, with the purpose of review for Quarterly.[4] Notwithstanding the depressing effects of the calomel, I feel the pleasure of being alone and uninterrupted. Few men, leading a quiet life, and without any

[1] James Clarkson, Esq., Surgeon, Melrose, son to Scott's old friend Dr. Clarkson of Selkirk.

[2] Job ii. 10.

[3] See Constable's Miscellany, vol. v.

[4] See the Quarterly Review for January 1826,—or Scott's Miscellaneous Prose, vol. xx.

strong or highly varied change of circumstances, have seen more variety of society than I—few have enjoyed it more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification; and were I obliged to account for hints afforded on such occasions, I should make an ample deduction from my narrative powers. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visitors, and have often taken a bannock and a bit of cheese to the wood or hill, to avoid dining with company. As I grew from boyhood to manhood, I saw this would not do; and that to gain a place in men's esteem, I must mix and bustle with them. Pride, and an exaltation of spirits, often supplied the real pleasure which others seem to feel in society; yet mine certainly upon many occasions was real. Still, if the question was, eternal company, without the power of retiring within yourself, or solitary confinement for life, I should say, "Turnkey, Lock the cell!" My life, though not without its fits of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy.[1]

I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can be realized. Somewhere it is said that this castle-building—this wielding of the unreal trowel, is fatal to exertions in actual life. I cannot tell—I have not found it so. I cannot, indeed, say, like Madame Genlis, that in the imaginary scenes in which I have acted a part, I ever prepared myself for anything which actually befell me; but I have certainly fashioned out much that made the present hour pass pleasantly away, and much that has enabled me to contribute to the amusement of the public. Since I was five years old, I cannot remember the time when I had not some ideal part to play for my own solitary amusement.

[1] As You Like It, Act IV. Scene 3.

'*December* 28.—Somehow I think the attack on Christmas Day has been of a critical kind; and having gone off so well, may be productive rather of health than continued indisposition. If one is to get a renewal of health in his fifty-fourth year, he must look to pay fine for it. Last night George Thomson came to see how I was, poor fellow. He has talent, is well informed, and has an excellent heart; but there is great eccentricity about him. I wish to God I saw him provided in a country kirk. That, with a rational wife, would, I think, bring him to a steady temper; at present he is between the tyning and the winning. If I could get him to set to any hard study, he would do something clever.

'*How to make a critic.*—A sly rogue, sheltering himself under the generic name of Mr. Campbell, requested of me, through the penny-post, the loan of £50 for two years, having an impulse, as he said, to make this demand. As I felt no corresponding impulse, I begged to decline a demand which might have been as reasonably made by any Campbell on earth; and another impulse has determined the man of fifty pounds to send me anonymous abuse of my works, and temper, and selfish disposition. The severity of the joke lies in 14d. for postage, to avoid which, his next epistle shall go back to the clerks of the Post Office, as not for Sir W—— S——. How the severe rogue would be disappointed, if he knew I never looked at more than the first and last lines of his satirical effusion! When I first saw that a literary profession was to be my fate, I endeavoured by all efforts of stoicism to divest myself of that irritable degree of sensibility—or, to speak plainly, of vanity—which makes the poetical race miserable and ridiculous. The anxiety of a poet for praise and for compliments I have always endeavoured to keep down.

'*December* 29.—Base feelings this same calomel gives one—mean, poor, and abject—a *wretch*, as Will Rose says.

Fie fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.[1]

Then it makes one "woefully dogged and snappish," as Dr. Rutty the Quaker[2] says in his *Gurnal*.—Must go to Woodstock, yet am vexed by that humour of contradiction which makes me incline to do anything else in preference. Commenced preface for the new edition of my Novels. The City of Cork send my freedom in a silver box.

'*December* 31.—Took a good sharp walk, the first time since my illness, and found myself the better in health and spirits. Being Hogmanay, there dined with us Colonel Russell and his sisters, Sir Adam Fergusson and Lady, Colonel Fergusson, with Mary and Margaret: an auld-world party, who made themselves happy in the auld fashion. I felt so tired about eleven, that I was forced to steal to bed.

'*January* 1, 1826.—A year has passed—another has commenced. These divisions of time influence our feelings as they recur. Yet there is nothing in it; for every day in the year closes a twelvemonth as well as the 31st December. The latter is only the solemn pause, as when a guide, showing a wild and mountainous road, calls on a party to look back at the scenes which they have just passed. To me this new year opens sadly. There are these troublesome pecuniary difficulties, which, however, I think this week should end. There is the absence of all my children, Anne excepted, from our little family festival. There is, besides, that ugly report of the 15th Hussars going to India. Walter, I suppose, will have some step in view, and will go, and I fear Jane will

[1] Burns.

[2] John Rutty, M.D., a physician of some eminence in Dublin, died in 1775, and his executors published his very curious and absurd 'Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies.' Boswell describes Johnson as being much amused with the Quaker Doctor's minute confessions. See the Life of Johnson, *sub anno* 1777.

not dissuade him.—A hard frosty day—cold, but dry and pleasant under foot. Walked into the plantations with Anne and Anne Russell. A thought strikes me, alluding to this period of the year. People say that the whole human frame, in all its parts and divisions, is gradually in the act of decaying and renewing. What a curious time-piece it would be that could indicate to us the moment this gradual and insensible change had so completely taken place, that no atom was left of the original person who had existed at a certain period, but there existed in his stead another person having the same thewes and sinews; the same face and lineaments; the same consciousness; a new ship built on an old plank; a pair of transmigrated stockings, like those of Sir John Cutler, all green, without one thread of the original black silk left! Singular—to be at once another and the same!

'*January* 2.—Weather clearing up in Edinburgh once more, and all will, I believe, do well. I am pressed to get on with Woodstock, and must try. I wish I could open a good vein of interest which would breathe freely. I must take my old way and write myself into good-humour with my task. It is only when I dally with what I am about, look back, and aside, instead of keeping my eyes straight forward, that I feel those cold sinkings of the heart. All men, I suppose, do so less or more. They are like the sensation of a sailor when the ship is cleared for action, and all are at their places—gloomy enough; but the first broadside puts all to rights. Dined at Huntly Burn with the Fergussons *en masse*.

January 3.—Promises a fair day, and I think the progress of my labours will afford me a little exercise. Walked with Colonel Russell from eleven till two, the first good day's exercise I have had since coming here. We went through all the Terrace, the Roman Planting,[1] over by the Stiel and Haxellcleuch, and so by the Rhymer's Glen to Chiefswood, which gave my heart a

[1] This plantation now covers the remains of an old Roman road from the Great Camp on the Eildon hills to the ford below Scott's house.

twinge, so disconsolate it seemed. Yet all is for the best. When I returned, signed a bond for £10,000, which will disencumber me of all pressing claim;[1] when I get forwards Woodstock and Nap. there will be £12,000 and upwards, and I hope to add £3000 against this time next year, or the devil must hold the dice. J. B. writes me seriously on the carelessness of my style. I did not think I had been more careless than usual; but I daresay he is right. I will be more cautious.

'*January* 4.—Despatched the deed executed yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Skene, my excellent friends, came to us from Edinburgh. Skene, distinguished for his attainments as a draughtsman, and for his highly gentlemanlike feelings and character, is Laird of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen. Having had an elder brother, his education was somewhat neglected in early life, against which disadvantage he made a most gallant fight, exerting himself much to obtain those accomplishments which he has since possessed. Admirable in all exercises, there entered a good deal of the cavalier into his early character. Of late he has given himself much to the study of antiquities. His wife, a most excellent person, was tenderly fond of Sophia. They bring so much old-fashioned kindness and good-humour with them, besides the recollections of other times, that they must be always welcome guests. Letter from Mr. Scrope,[2] announcing a visit.

[1] When settling his estate on his eldest son, Sir Walter had retained the power of burdening it with £10,000 for behoof of his younger children: he now raised the sum for the assistance of the struggling firms. See *ante*, p. 384.

[2] William Scrope, Esq., of Lincolnshire—the representative of the Lords Scrope of Bolton (to whose peerage he is, I believe, entitled), was at this period much in Scotland, being a zealous angler and deer-stalker. He had a lease of Lord Somerville's pavilion opposite Melrose, and lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with Sir Walter Scott. There occurs in a subsequent entry an allusion to Mr. Scrope's eminence as an amateur artist. [Since these pages first appeared, Mr. Scrope's varied accomplishments have been displayed in the interesting and elegant volume entitled 'Art of Deer-Stalking.' Royal 8vo. London, 1839.]

'*January* 5.—Got the desired accommodation, which will put J. B. quite straight, but am a little anxious still about Constable. He has immense stock, to be sure, and most valuable, but he may have sacrifices to make to convert a large proportion of it into ready money. The accounts from London are most disastrous. Many wealthy persons totally ruined, and many many more have been obliged to purchase their safety at a price they will feel all their lives. I do not hear things have been so bad in Edinburgh; and J. B.'s business has been transacted by the banks with liberality.

'Colonel Russell told us last night that the last of the Moguls, a descendant of Kubla Khan, though having no more power than his effigies at the back of a set of playing-cards, refused to meet Lord Hastings, because the Governor-General would not agree to remain standing in his presence. Pretty well for the blood of Timur in these degenerate days!

'Much alarmed. I had walked till twelve with Skene and Russell, and then sat down to my work. To my horror and surprise I could neither write nor spell, but put down one word for another, and wrote nonsense. I was much overpowered at the same time, and could not conceive the reason. I fell asleep, however, in my chair, and slept for two hours. On my waking, my head was clearer, and I began to recollect that last night I had taken the anodyne left for the purpose by Clarkson, and, being disturbed in the course of the night, I had not slept it off. Obliged to give up writing to-day—read Pepys instead.

'*January* 6.—This seems to be a feeding storm, coming on by little and little. Wrought all day, and dined quiet. My disorder is wearing off, and the quiet society of the Skenes suits my present humour. I really thought I was in for some very bad illness. Curious expression of an Indian-born boy just come from Bengal, a son of my cousin George Swinton. The child saw a hare run across the fields, and exclaimed, "See, there is a little tiger!"

'*January* 7—*Sunday*.—Knight, a young artist, son of the performer, came to do a picture of me at the request of Terry. This is very far from being agreeable, as I submitted to that state of constraint last year to Newton, at request of Lockhart; to Leslie, at request of my American friend;[1] to Wilkie, for his picture of the King's arrival at Holyrood House; and some one besides. I am as tired of the operation as old Maida, who had been so often sketched that he got up and walked off with signs of loathing whenever he saw an artist unfurl his paper and handle his brushes. But this young man is civil and modest; and I have agreed he shall be in the room while I work, and take the best likeness he can, without compelling me into the fixed attitude and yawning fatigues of an actual sitting. I think, if he has talent, he may do more my way than in the customary mode; at least I can't have the hang-dog look which the unfortunate Theseus has who is doomed to sit for what seems an eternity.[2]

'I wrought till two o'clock—indeed till I was almost nervous with correcting and scribbling. I then walked, or rather was dragged through the snow by Tom Purdie, while Skene accompanied. What a blessing there is in a fellow like Tom, whom no familiarity can spoil, whom you may scold and praise and joke with, knowing the quality of the man is unalterable in his love and reverence to his master. Use an ordinary servant in the same way, and he will be your master in a month. We should thank God for the snow as well as summer flowers. This brushing exercise has put all my nerves into tone again, which were really jarred with fatigue until my very back-bone seemed breaking. This comes of trying to do too much. J. B.'s news are as good as possible.—Prudence, prudence, and all will do excellently.

[1] Sir Walter omits the name of his friend,—Mr. Ticknor of Boston, who possesses Mr. Leslie's portrait.

[2] sedet, æternumque sedebit
Infelix Theseus——
VIRGIL.

'*January* 8.—Frost and snow still. Write to excuse myself from attending the funeral of my aunt Mrs. Curle, which takes place to-morrow at Kelso. She was a woman of the old Sandy-Knowe breed, with the strong sense, high principle, and indifferent temper which belonged to my father's family. She lived with great credit on a moderate income, and I believe gave away a great deal of it.[1]

'*January* 9.—Mathews the comedian, and his son, come to spend a day at Abbotsford. Mr. Scrope also comes out.

'*January* 10.—Bodily health, the mainspring of the microcosm, seems quite restored. No more flushing or nervous fits, but the sound mind in the sound body. What poor things does a fever-fit or an overflowing of bile make of the master of creation. The snow begins to fall thick this morning—

> The landlord then aloud did say,
> As how he wished they would go away.

To have our friends shut up here would be rather too much of a good thing. The day cleared up, and was very pleasant. Had a good walk, and looked at the curling. Mr. Mathews made himself very amusing in the evening. He has the good-nature to show his accomplishments without pressing, and without the appearance of feeling pain. On the contrary, I daresay he enjoys the pleasure he communicates.

'*January* 11.—I got proof-sheets, in which it seems I have repeated a whole passage of history which had been told before. James is in an awful stew, and I cannot blame him; but then he should consider the

[1] In a letter of this date, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, Sir Walter says—'Poor aunt Curle died like a Roman, or rather like one of the Sandy-Knowe bairns, the most stoical race I ever knew. She turned every one out of the room, and drew her last breath alone. So did my uncle Captain Robert Scott, and several others of that family.'

hyoscyamus which I was taking, and the anxious botheration about the money-market. However, as Chaucer says—

> There is na workeman
> That can bothe worken wel and hastilie,
> This must be done at leisure parfaitly.

'*January* 12.—Mathews last night gave us a very perfect imitation of Old Cumberland, who carried the poetic jealousy and irritability farther than any man I ever saw. He was a great flatterer, too, the old rogue. Will Erskine used to admire him. I think he wanted originality. A very high-bred man in point of manners in society. Upon the whole, the days pass pleasantly enough—work till one or two, then an hour or two hours' walk in the snow, then lighter work, or reading. Late dinner, and singing, or chat, in the evening. Mathews has really all the will, as well as the talent, to be amusing. He confirms my idea of ventriloquism (which is an absurd word), as being merely the art of imitating sounds at a greater or less distance, assisted by some little points of trick to influence the imagination of the audience—the vulgar idea of a peculiar organization (beyond fineness of ear and of utterance) is nonsense.

'*January* 13.—Our party are about to disperse—

> Like youthful steers unyoked, east, north, and south.[1]

I am not sorry, being one of those whom too much mirth always inclines to sadness. The missing so many of my own family, together with the serious inconveniences to which I have been exposed, give me at present a desire to be alone. The Skenes return to Edinburgh, so does Mr. Scrope—*item*, the little artist; Mathews to Newcastle; his son to Liverpool. So *exeunt omnes*.

'Mathews assures me that Sheridan was generally very dull in society, and sate sullen and silent, swallowing glass after glass, rather a hindrance than a help. But there was a time when he broke out with a resumption of

[1] 2nd King Henry IV. Act IV. Scene 2.

what had been going on, done with great force, and generally attacking some person in the company, or some opinion which he had expressed. I never saw Sheridan but in large parties. He had a Bardolph countenance, with heavy features, but his eye possessed the most distinguished brilliancy. Mathews says it is very simple in Tom Moore to admire how Sheridan came by the means of paying the price of Drury-Lane Theatre, when all the world knows he never paid it at all; and that Lacy, who sold it, was reduced to want by his breach of faith.[1]

'*January* 14.—An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. Luckily the funny people are gone, and I shall not have the task of grinning when I am serious enough.

'A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C. well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so surely, if I will. At least, I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance, shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil, and cannot remedy it.

'*January* 15.—Like yesterday, a hard frost. Thermometer at 10; water in my dressing-room frozen to

[1] See Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 191. This work was published late in 1825.

flint; yet I had a fine walk yesterday, the sun dancing delightfully on 'grim Nature's visage hoar.'[1] Were it not the plague of being dragged along by another person, I should like such weather as well as summer, but having Tom Purdie to do this office, reconciles me to it. *I cannot cleik with John*, as old Mrs. Mure [of Caldwell] used to say. I mean, that an ordinary menial servant thus hooked to your side reminds me of the twin bodies mentioned by Pitscottie, being two trunks on the same waist and legs. One died before the other, and remained a dead burden on the back of its companion. Such is the close union with a person whom you cannot well converse with, and whose presence is yet indispensable to your getting on. An actual companion, whether humble or your equal, is still worse. But Tom Purdie is just the thing, kneaded up between the friend and servant, as well as Uncle Toby's bowling-green between sand and clay. You are certain he is proud as well as patient under his burden, and you are under no more constraint than with a pony. I must ride him to-day if the weather holds up. Meantime, I will correct that curious fellow Pepys' Diary. I mean the article I have made of it for the Quarterly.

'*Edinburgh, January* 16.—Came through cold roads to as cold news. Hurst and Robinson have suffered a bill to come back upon Constable, which I suppose infers the ruin of both houses. We shall soon see. Dined with the Skenes.

'*January* 17.—James Ballantyne this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation; has indeed taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle. Have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being the preses. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie, died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S., and yet the

[1] Burns's *Vision*.

feeling is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles, to look after. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament House—felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris;* and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent. I have seen Cadell, Ballantyne, and Hogarth; all advise me to execute a trust of my property for payment of my obligations; so does John Gibson,[1] and so I resolve to do. My wife and daughter are gloomy, but yet patient.

'*January* 18.—He that sleeps too long in the morning, let him borrow the pillow of a debtor. So says the Spaniard, and so say I. I had of course an indifferent night of it. I wish these two days were over; but the worst *is over*. The Bank of Scotland has behaved very well; expressing a resolution to serve Constable's house and me to the uttermost; but as no one can say to what extent Hurst and Robinson's failure may go, borrowing would but linger it out.

'*January* 19.—During yesterday I received formal visits from my friends Skene and Colin Mackenzie (who, I am glad to see, looks well), with every offer of service. The Royal Bank also sent Sir John Hope[2] and Sir Henry Jardine[3] to offer to comply with my wishes. The Advocate[4] came on the same errand. But I gave all the same answer—that my intention was to put the whole into the hands of a trustee, and to be contented with the event, and that all I had to ask was

[1] Mr. John Gibson, junior, W.S., Mr. James Jollie, W.S., and Mr. Alexander Monypenny, W.S., were the three gentlemen who ultimately agreed to take charge, as trustees, of Sir Walter Scot's affairs; and certainly no gentlemen ever acquitted themselves of such an office in a manner more honourable to themselves, or more satisfactory to a client and his creditors.

[2] Sir John Hope of Pinkie and Craighall, Bart.

[3] Sir H. Jardine, Remembrancer in the Scotch Exchequer.

[4] The Right Hon. Sir W. Rae, Bart.

time to do so, and to extricate my affairs. I was assured of every accommodation in this way. From all quarters I have had the same kindness.—Letters from Constable and Robinson have arrived. The last persist in saying they will pay all and everybody. They say, moreover, in a postscript, that had Constable been in town ten days sooner, all would have been well. I feel quite composed and determined to labour. There is no remedy. I *guess* (as Mathews makes his Yankees say) that we shall not be troubled with visitors, and I *calculate* that I will not go out at all; so what can I do better than labour? Even yesterday I went about making notes on Waverley, according to Constable's plan. It will do good one day. To-day, when I lock this volume, I go to Woodstock. Heigho!—Knight came to stare at me to complete his portrait. He must have read a tragic page comparative to what he saw at Abbotsford.—We dined of course at home, and before and after dinner I finished about twenty printed pages of Woodstock, but to what effect others must judge. A painful scene after dinner, and another after supper, endeavouring to convince these poor dear creatures that they must not look for miracles, but consider the misfortune as certain, and only to be lessened by patience and labour.

'*January* 20.—Indifferent night—very bilious, which may be want of exercise. *Mais, pourtant, cultivons notre jardin.* The public favour is my only lottery. I have long enjoyed the foremost prize, and something in my breast tells me my evil genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Why should I not? I have no enemies—many attached friends. The popular ascendency which I have maintained is of the kind which is rather improved by frequent appearances. In fact, critics may say what they will, but '*hain* your reputation, and *tyne*[1] your reputation,' is a true proverb.

[1] To *hain* anything is, *Anglicè*, to deal very carefully, penuriously about it—*tyne*, to lose. Scot often used to say, 'hain a pen and tyne a pen,' which is nearer the proverb alluded to.

'Sir William Forbes[1] called,—the same kind, honest, friend as ever, with all offers of assistance, etc. etc. etc. All anxious to serve me, and careless about their own risk of loss. And these are the cold, hard, money-making men, whose questions and control I apprehended! Lord Chief Commissioner Adam also came to see me, and the meeting, though pleasing, was melancholy. It was the first time we had met since the *break-up* of his hopes in the death of his eldest son on his return from India, where he was Chief in Council, and highly esteemed.[2] The Commissioner is not a very early friend of mine, for I scarcely knew him till his settlement in Scotland with his present office. But I have since lived much with him, and taken kindly to him as one of the most pleasant, kind-hearted, benevolent men I have ever known. It is high treason among the Tories to express regard for him or respect for the Jury Court in which he presides. I was against that experiment as much as any one. But it is an experiment, and the establishment (which the fools will not perceive) is the only thing which I see likely to give some prospects of ambition to our bar, which has been otherwise so much diminished. As for the Chief Commissioner, I daresay he does what all other people of consequence do in elections, and so forth. But he is the personal friend of the King, and the decided enemy of whatever strikes at the constitutional rights of the Monarch; besides, I love him for the various changes which he has endured through life, and which have been so great as to make him entitled to be regarded in one point of view as the most fortunate—in the other, the most unfortunate man in the world. He has gained and lost two fortunes by the same good luck and the same rash confidence, of which one raised, and the other now threatens, my *peculium*. And his quiet, honourable, and

[1] The late Sir William Forbes, Bart., succeeded his father (the biographer of Beattie) as chief of the head private banking-house in Edinburgh. Scott's amiable friend died 24th October 1828.

[2] John Adam, Esq. died on shipboard, on his passage homewards from Calcutta, 4th June 1825.

generous submission under circumstances more painful than mine,—for the loss of world's wealth was to him aggravated by the death of his youngest and darling son in the West Indies—furnished me at the time and now with a noble example. So Tory and Whig may go be d—d together, as names that have disturbed old Scotland, and torn asunder the most kindly feelings, since the first day they were invented. Yes, d—n them, they are the spells to rouse all our angry passions, and I daresay, notwithstanding the opinion of my private and calm moments, I will open on the cry again so soon as something occurs to claim my words. Even yet, God knows, I would fight in honourable contest with word or blow, for my political opinions; but I cannot permit that strife to mix its waters with my daily meal, those waters of bitterness which poison all mutual love and confidence betwixt the well-disposed on either side, and prevent them, if need were, from making mutual concessions and balancing the constitution against the ultras of both parties. The good man seems something broken by these afflictions.

'*January* 21.—Susannah in Tristram Shandy thinks death is best met in bed. I am sure trouble and vexation are not. The watches of the night press wearily when disturbed by fruitless regrets and disagreeable anticipations. But let it pass.

> Well, Goodman Time, or blunt, or keen,
> Move thou quick, or take thy leisure,
> Longest day will have its e'en,
> Weariest life but treads a measure.

'I have seen Cadell, who is very much downcast for the risk of their copyrights being thrown away by a hasty sale. I suggested that if they went very cheap, some means might be fallen on to purchase them in. I fear the split betwixt Constable and Cadell will render impossible what might otherwise be hopeful enough. It is the Italian race-horses, I think, which, instead of riders,

have spurs tied to their sides, so as to prick them into a constant gallop. Cadell tells me their gross profit was sometimes £10,000 a year, but much swallowed up with expenses, and his partner's drafts which came to £4000 yearly. What there is to show for this, God knows. Constable's apparent expenses were very much within bounds.

'Colin Mackenzie entered, and with his usual kindness engages to use his influence to recommend some moderate proceeding to Constable's creditors, such as may permit him to go on and turn that species of property to account, which no man alive can manage so well as he.

'Followed Mr. Gibson with a most melancholy tale. Things are much worse with Constable than I apprehended. "Naked we entered the world, and naked we leave it—blessed be the name of the Lord!"[1]

'*January* 22.—I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad—now really bad news I have received. I have walked my last on the domains I have planted —sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them. My poor people whom I loved so well!—There is just another die to turn up against me in this run of ill-luck;—*i.e.* If I should break my magic wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then Woodstock and Bony may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin, I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I would like, methinks, to go abroad,

And lay my bones far from the *Tweed*.

But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work *doggedly*, as Dr. Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man as I ever was—neither low-

[1] Job i. 21.

spirited nor *distrait*. In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer; the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage.

'Poor Mr. Pole the harper sent to offer me £500 or £600, probably his all.[1] There is much good in the world, after all. But I will involve no friend, either rich or poor. My own right hand shall do it—else will I be *done* in the slang language, and *undone* in common parlance.

'I am glad that, beyond my own family, who are, excepting Lady S., young and able to bear sorrow, of which this is the first taste to some of them, most of the hearts are past aching which would have once been inconsolable on this occasion. I do not mean that many will not seriously regret, and some perhaps lament my misfortunes. But my dear mother, my almost sister, Christy Rutherford, poor Will Erskine; those would have been mourners indeed.

'Well — exertion — exertion. O, Invention rouse thyself! May man be kind! May God be propitious! The worst is, I never quite know when I am right or wrong; and Ballantyne, who does know in some degree, will fear to tell me. Lockhart would be worth gold just now, but he too might be too diffident to speak broad out.

[1] Mr. Pole had long attended Sir Walter Scott's daughters as teacher of the harp. To the end, Scott always spoke of his conduct on this occasion as the most affecting circumstance that accompanied his disasters. His letter was as follows:—

'*To Sir W. Scott, Bart.*

'Dear Sir—I need not tell you how unhappy I am to hear of your sad distresses; but if I can relieve them for an hour, I shall in some measure be repaid. I have five or six hundred pounds that I have no use for, as I am in debt to no soul, and if you can wait, I will dispose of all I have, and convert them into money. It is a duty I owe you; for it is by your kind countenance, as well as a share of good conduct, that I have been able to save a few hundred pounds, which are quite at your service. The acceptance of which, till brighter times to you, will oblige, dear Sir Walter, your obedient

'John Fred. Pole.'

All my hope is in the continued indulgence of the public. I have a funeral-letter to the burial of the Chevalier Yelin, a foreigner of learning and talent, who has died at the Royal Hotel. He wished to be introduced to me, and was to have read a paper before the Royal Society, when this introduction was to have taken place. I was not at the Society that evening, and the poor gentleman was taken ill at the meeting and unable to proceed. He went to his bed and never rose again; and now his funeral will be the first public place I shall appear at. He dead, and I ruined.—This is what you call a meeting.

'*January* 23.—Slept ill, not having been abroad these eight days—*splendida bilis*. Then a dead sleep in the morning, and when the awakening comes, a strong feeling how well I could dispense with it for once and for ever. This passes away, however, as better and more dutiful thoughts arise in my mind. I know not if my imagination has flagged; probably it has; but at least my powers of labour have not diminished during the last melancholy week. On Monday and Tuesday my exertions were suspended. Since Wednesday inclusive, I have written thirty-eight of my close manuscript pages, of which seventy make a volume of the usual Novel size.

'Wrote till twelve A.M., finishing half of what I call a good day's work—ten pages of print, or rather twelve. Then walked in the Prince's Street pleasure-grounds with good Samaritan James Skene, the only one among my numerous friends who can properly be termed *amicus curarum mearum*, others being too busy or too gay, and several being estranged by habit.

'The walks have been conducted on the whole with much taste, though Skene has undergone much criticism, the usual reward of public exertions, on account of his plans. It is singular to walk close beneath the grim old castle, and think what scenes it must have seen, and how many generations of threescore and ten have risen and passed away. It is a place to cure one of too much sensation over earthly subjects of mutation. My wife and girl's

tongues are chatting in a lively manner in the drawing-room. It does me good to hear them.

'*January* 24.—Constable came yesterday, and saw me for half an hour. He seemed irritable, but kept his temper under command. Was a little shocked when I intimated that I was disposed to regard the present works in progress as my own. I think I saw two things:—1. That he is desirous to return into the management of his own affairs without Cadell, if he can. 2. That he relies on my connexion as the way of helping him out of the slough. Indeed he said he was ruined utterly without my countenance. I certainly will befriend him if I can, but Constable without Cadell is like getting the clock without the pendulum:—the one having the ingenuity, the other the caution of the business. I will see my way before making any bargain, and I will help them, I am sure, if I can, without endangering my last cast for freedom.—Worked out my task yesterday.—My kind friend Mrs. Coutts has got the cadetship for Pringle Shortreed, in which I was peculiarly interested.

'I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected. It is singular to see the difference of men's manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good-day, as if to say, "Think nothing about it, my lad; it is quite out of our thoughts." Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred—all, I believe, meaning equally well—just shook hands and went on. A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it. If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should,

at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs. No, if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me. Went to the funeral of Chevalier Yelin, the literary foreigner mentioned on 22nd. How many and how various are the ways of affliction! Here is this poor man dying at a distance from home, his proud heart broken, his wife and family anxiously expecting letters, and doomed only to learn they have lost a husband and father for ever. He lies buried on the Calton Hill, near learned and scientific dust—the graves of David Hume and John Playfair being side by side.

'*January* 25.—Anne is ill this morning. May God help us! If it should prove serious, as I have known it in such cases, where am I to find courage or comfort? A thought has struck me—Can we do nothing for creditors with the goblin drama, called the Fortunes of Devorgoil? Could it not be added to Woodstock as a fourth volume? Terry refused a gift of it, but he was quite and entirely wrong; it is not good, but it may be made so. Poor Will Erskine liked it much.

'*January* 26.—Spoke to J. B. last night about Devorgoil, who does not seem to relish the proposal, alleging the comparative failure of Halidon Hill. Ay, says Self-Conceit, but he has not read it—and when he does, it is the sort of wild fanciful work betwixt heaven and earth, which men of solid parts do not estimate. Pepys thought Shakspeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream the most silly play he had ever seen, and Pepys was probably judging on the same grounds with J. B., though presumptuous enough to form conclusions against a very different work

from any of mine. How if I send it to Lockhart by and by?

'Gibson comes with a joyful face, announcing all the creditors had unanimously agreed to a private trust. This is handsome and confidential, and must warm my best efforts to get them out of the scrape. I will not doubt—to doubt is to lose. Sir William Forbes took the chair, and behaved, as he has ever done, with the generosity of ancient faith and early friendship. That House is more deeply concerned than most. In what scenes have Sir William and I not borne share together—desperate and almost bloody affrays, rivalries, deep drinking matches, and finally, with the kindliest feelings on both sides, somewhat separated by his retiring much within the bosom of his family, and I moving little beyond mine. It is fated our planets should cross, though, and that at the periods most interesting for me. Down—down—a hundred thoughts.

'I hope to sleep better to-night. If I do not, I shall get ill, and then I cannot keep my engagements. Is it not odd? I can command my eyes to be awake when toil and weariness sit on my eyelids, but to draw the curtain of oblivion is beyond my power. I remember some of the wild Buccaneers, in their impiety, succeeded pretty well by shutting hatches and burning brimstone and assafœtida to make a tolerable imitation of *hell*—but the pirates' *heaven* was a wretched affair. It is one of the worst things about this system of ours, that it is a hundred times more easy to inflict pain than to create pleasure.

'*January 27th.*—Slept better and less bilious, owing doubtless to the fatigue of the preceding night, and the more comfortable news. Wrote to Laidlaw, directing him to make all preparations for reduction. The Celtic Society present me with the most splendid broadsword I ever saw; a beautiful piece of art, and a most noble weapon. Honourable Mr. Steuart (second son of the Earl of Moray), General Graham Stirling, and Mac-

Dougal, attended as a committee to present it. This was very kind of my friends the Celts, with whom I have had so many merry meetings. It will be a rare legacy to Walter—for myself, good lack! it is like Lady Dowager Don's prize in a lottery of hardware; she—a venerable lady who always wore a haunch-hoop, silk negligé, and triple ruffles at the elbow—having the luck to gain a pair of silver spurs and a whip to correspond.

'*January* 28*th*.—These last four or five days I have wrought little; to-day I set on the steam and ply my paddles.

'*January* 29.—The proofs came so thick in yesterday that much was not done. But I began to be hard at work to-day. I must not *gurnalize* much.

'Mr. Jollie, who is to be my trustee, in conjunction with Gibson, came to see me;—a pleasant and good-humoured man, and has high reputation as a man of business. I told him, and I will keep my word, that he would at least have no trouble by my interfering and thwarting their management, which is not the unfrequent case of trusters and trustees.

'Constable's business seems unintelligible. No man thought the house worth less than £150,000. Constable told me, when he was making his will, that he was worth £80,000. Great profits on almost all the adventures. No bad speculations—yet neither stock nor debt to show. Constable might have eaten up his share; but Cadell was very frugal. No doubt trading almost entirely on accommodation is dreadfully expensive.

'*January* 30.—I laboured fairly yesterday. The steam rose fast—if clearly, is another question; but there is bulk for it, at least—about thirty printed pages.

And now again, boys, to the oar.

'*January* 31.—There being nothing in the roll this morning, I stay at home from the Court, and add another

day's perfect labour to Woodstock, which is worth five days of snatched intervals, when the current of thought and invention is broken in upon, and the mind shaken and diverted from its purpose by a succession of petty interruptions. I have now no pecuniary provisions to embarrass me, and I think, now the shock of the discovery is past and over, I am much better off on the whole. I feel as if I had shaken off from my shoulders a great mass of garments, rich indeed, but always more a burden than a comfort. I shall be free of an hundred petty public duties imposed on me as a man of consideration—of the expense of a great hospitality—and what is better, of the great waste of time connected with it. I have known in my day all kinds of society, and can pretty well estimate how much or how little one loses by retiring from all but that which is very intimate. I sleep and eat and work as I was wont; and if I could see those about me as indifferent to the loss of rank as I am, I should be completely happy. As it is, Time must salve that sore, and to Time I trust it.

'Since the 14th of this month no guest has broken bread in my house, save G. H. Gordon[1] one morning at breakfast. This happened never before since I had a house of my own. But I have played Abou Hassan long enough; and if the Caliph comes I would turn him back again.

'*February* 1.—A most generous letter (though not more so than I expected) from Walter and Jane, offering to interpose with their fortune, etc. God Almighty forbid!—that were too unnatural in me to accept, though dutiful and affectionate in them to offer. They talk of India still. With my damaged fortune I cannot help them to remain by exchange, and so forth. God send what is for the best. Attended the Court, and saw J. B. and Cadell as I returned. Both very gloomy. Came home to work, etc., about two.

[1] Mr. Gordon (of whom more in the sequel) was at this time Scott's amanuensis: he copied, that is to say, the MS. for press.

'*February* 2.—An odd visit this morning from Miss —— of ——, whose lawsuit with a Methodist parson of the name of —— made some noise. The worthy divine had in the basest manner interfered to prevent this lady's marriage by two anonymous letters, in which he contrived to refer the lover, to whom they were addressed, for farther corroboration to *himself*. The whole imposition makes the subject of a little pamphlet. The lady ventured for redress into the thicket of English law—lost one suit—gained another, with £300 damages, and was ruined. The appearance and person of Miss —— are prepossessing. She is about thirty years old, a brunette, with regular and pleasing features, marked with melancholy —an enthusiast in literature, and probably in religion. She had been at Abbotsford to see me, and made her way to me here, in the vain hope that she could get her story worked up into a novel; and certainly the thing is capable of interesting situations. It throws a curious light upon the aristocratic or rather hieratic influence exercised by the Methodist preachers within the *connexion*, as it is called. Admirable food this would be for the Quarterly, or any other reviewers, who might desire to feed fat their grudge against these sectarians. But there are two reasons against such a publication. First, it could do the poor sufferer no good. 2ndly, It might hurt the Methodist connexion very much, which I for one would not like to injure. They have their faults, and are peculiarly liable to those of hypocrisy, and spiritual ambition, and priestcraft. On the other hand, they do infinite good, carrying religion into classes in society where it would scarce be found to penetrate, did it rely merely upon proof of its doctrines, upon calm reason, and upon rational argument. The Methodists add a powerful appeal to the feelings and passions; and though I believe this is often exaggerated into absolute enthusiasm, yet I consider upon the whole they do much to keep alive a sense of religion, and the practice of morality necessarily connected with it. It is much to the discredit of the Methodist clergy, that when this calumniator was actually convicted of guilt morally

worse than many men are hanged for, they only degraded him from the *first* to the *second* class of their preachers. If they believed him innocent, they did too much—if guilty, far too little.

'*February* 3.—This is the first time since my troubles that I felt at awaking—

> I had drunken deep
> Of all the blessedness of sleep.

I made not the slightest pause, nor dreamed a single dream, nor even changed my side. This is a blessing to be grateful for. There is to be a meeting of the creditors to-day, but I care not for the issue. If they drag me into the Court, *obtorto collo*, instead of going into this scheme of arrangement, they will do themselves a great injury, and perhaps eventually do me good, though it would give me much pain.—James Ballantyne is severely critical on what he calls imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe in Woodstock. Many will think with him—yet I am of opinion he is quite wrong, or as friend J. F.[1] says, *vrong*. In the first place,

[1] J. F. stands for James Ferrier, Esq.—one of Sir Walter's brethren of the Clerk's table—the father of his esteemed and admired friend the authoress of 'Marriage,' 'The Inheritance,' etc. [I have found, as this second edition was advancing through the press, that Sir Walter owed not a little to the kindness of Mr. Ferrier, in the arrangement with Mr. Home, by which he came, in 1811, into the full enjoyment of his rights as a Clerk of Session. The following is part of a letter to Mr. F., dated Ashestiel, 18th Sept. 1811:—'MY DEAR SIR, I am favoured with your letter, acquainting me with your kind exertions on my part to supply my Lord Advocate with his materials. If I were to begin acknowledging my feelings of the friendship which you have shown me in this (to me very important matter), it would fill a much longer letter than at present I propose to write. But as you have thought me worthy of so much kindness, you must also give me credit for feeling it as I should do, and that is all that can be said among friends.

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* * * * * *

'Yours faithfully, WALTER SCOTT.

'Pray, as you are a ruling elder, solve me a case of conscience. They are clearing out the modern additions from Melrose Abbey—will it be absolute sacrilege to build my cottage with the stones their operations afford, providing I can get them for next to nothing?']

am I to look on the mere fact of another author having treated a subject happily, as a bird looks on a potato-bogle which scares it away from a field, otherwise as free to its depredations as anywhere else? In 2nd place, I have taken a wide difference; my object is not to excite fear of supernatural things in my reader, but to show the effect of such fear upon the agents in the story—one a man of sense and firmness—one a man unhinged by remorse—one a stupid unenquiring clown—one a learned and worthy, but superstitious divine. In 3rd place, the book turns on this hinge, and cannot want it. But I will try to insinuate the refutation of Aldiboronti's exception into the prefatory matter.—From the 19th January to the 2nd February inclusive is exactly fifteen days, during which time, with the intervention of some days' idleness, to let imagination brood on the task a little, I have written a volume. I think, for a bet, I could have done it in ten days. Then I must have had no Court of Session to take me up hours every morning, and dissipate my attention and powers of working for the rest of the day. A volume, at cheapest, is worth £1000. This is working at the rate of £24,000 a year; but then we must not bake buns faster than people have appetite to eat them. They are not essential to the market, like potatoes.

'John Gibson came to tell me in the evening that a meeting to-day had approved of the proposed trust. I know not why, but the news gives me little concern. I heard it as a party indifferent. I remember hearing that Mandrin[1] testified some horror when he found himself bound alive on the wheel, and saw the executioner approach with a bar of iron to break his limbs. After the second and third blow, he fell a-laughing, and being asked the reason by his confessor, said he laughed at his own folly, which had anticipated increased agony at every

[1] 'Authentic Memoirs of the remarkable Life and surprising Exploits of Mandrin, Captain-General of the French Smugglers, who for the space of nine months resolutely stood in defiance of the whole Army of France, etc., 8vo, Lond. 1755.' See Waverley Novels, vol. xxxvii. p. 434—*Note.*

blow, when it was obvious that the *first* must have jarred and confounded the system of the nerves so much as to render the succeeding blows of little consequence. I suppose it is so with the moral feeling; at least I could not bring myself to be anxious whether these matters were settled one way or other.

'*February* 4.—Wrote to Mr. Laidlaw to come to town upon Monday, and see the trustees. To farm or not to farm, that is the question. With our careless habits, it were best, I think, to risk as little as possible. Lady Scott will not exceed with ready money in her hand; but calculating on the produce of a farm is different, and neither she nor I are capable of that minute economy. Two cows should be all we should keep. But I find Lady S. inclines much for the four. If she had her youthful activity, and could manage things, it would be well, and would amuse her. But I fear it is too late for work.

'Wrote only two pages (of manuscript) and a half to-day. As the boatswain said, one can't dance always *nouther*. But, were we sure of the quality of the stuff, what opportunities for labour does this same system of retreat afford us! I am convinced that in three years I could do more than in the last ten, but for the mine being, I fear, exhausted. Give me my popularity (*an awful postulate!*) and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years; and it is *not* lost yet, at least.

'*February* 5.—Rose after a sound sleep, and here am I without bile or anything to perturb my inward man. It is just about three weeks since so great a change took place in my relations in society, and already I am indifferent to it. But I have been always told my feelings of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, enjoyment and privation, are much colder than those of other people.

I think the Romans call it stoicism.

'Missie was in the drawing-room, and overheard William Clerk and me laughing excessively at some

foolery or other in the back-room, to her no small surprise, which she did not keep to herself. But do people suppose that he was less sorry for his poor sister, or I for my lost fortune? If I have a very strong passion in the world, it is *pride*, and that never hinged upon world's gear, which was always with me—light come, light go.

'*February* 6.—Letters received yesterday from Lord Montagu, John Morritt, and Mrs. Hughes,—kind and dear friends all—with solicitous enquiries. But it is very tiresome to tell my story over again, and I really hope I have few more friends intimate enough to ask me for it. I dread letter-writing, and envy the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen or ink. What then? one must write; it is a part of the law we live on. Talking of writing, I finished my six pages, neat, and handsome, yesterday.—*N.B.* At night I fell asleep, and the oil dropped from the lamp upon my manuscript. Will this extreme unction make it go smoothly down with the public?

> Thus idly we profane the sacred time,
> By silly prose, light jest, and lighter rhyme.

I have a song to write, too, and I am not thinking of it. I trust it will come upon me at once—a sort of catch it should be.[1] I walked out, feeling a little overwrought.

'*February* 7.—My old friend Sir Peter Murray called to offer his own assistance, Lord Justice-Clerk's, and Abercromby's, to negotiate for me a seat upon the Bench [of the Court of Session] instead of my sheriffdom and clerkship. I explained to him the use which I could make of my pen was not, I thought, consistent with that situation; and that, besides, I had neglected the law too long to permit me to think of it: but this was kindly and honourably done. I can see people think me much worse off than I think myself. They may be right; but I will not be beat till I have tried a rally, and a bold one.

'*February* 8.—Slept ill, and rather bilious in the

[1] See 'Glee for King Charles,' Waverley Novels, vol. xl. p. 40.

morning. Many of the Bench now are my juniors. I will not seek *ex eleemosyna* a place which, had I turned my studies that way, I might have aspired to long ago *ex meritis*. My pen should do much better for me than the odd £1000 a year. If it fails, I will lean on what they leave me. Another chance might be, if it fails, in the patronage which might, after a year or two, place me in Exchequer. But I do not count on this unless, indeed, the Duke of Buccleuch, when he comes of age, should choose to make play. Got to my work again, and wrote easier than the two last days.

'Mr. Laidlaw came in from Abbotsford, and dined with us. We spent the evening in laying down plans for the farm, and deciding whom we should keep and whom dismiss among the people. This we did on the true negro-driving principle of self-interest—the only principle I know which *never* swerves from its objects. We chose all the active, young, and powerful men, turning old age and infirmity adrift. I cannot help this, for a guinea cannot do the work of five; but I will contrive to make it easier to the sufferers.

'*February* 9.—A stormy morning, lowering and blustering like our fortunes. *Mea virtute me involvo.* But I must say to the muse of fiction as the Earl of Pembroke said to the ejected nuns of Wilton:—"Go spin, you jades, go spin!" Perhaps she has no tow on her *rock*. When I was at Kilkenny last year we went to see a nunnery, but could not converse with the sisters because they were in *strict retreat*. I was delighted with the red-nosed Padre, who showed us the place with a sort of proud, unctuous humiliation, and apparent dereliction of the world, that had to me the air of a complete Tartuffe; a strong, sanguine, square-shouldered son of the Church, whom a Protestant would be apt to warrant against any sufferings he was like to sustain by privation. My purpose, however, just now was to talk of the *strict retreat*, which did not prevent the nuns from walking in their little garden, peeping at us, and allowing us to peep

at them. Well, now *we* are in *strict retreat;* and if we had been so last year, instead of gallivanting to Ireland, this affair might not have befallen—if literary labour could have prevented it. But who could have suspected Constable's timbers to have been rotten from the beginning?

'Visited the Exhibition on my way home from the Court. The new rooms are most splendid, and several good pictures. The institution has subsisted but five years, and it is astonishing how much superior the worst of the present collection are to the teaboard-looking things which first appeared. John Thomson, of Duddingstone, has far the finest picture in the Exhibition, of a large size—subject *Dunluce*, a ruinous castle of the Antrim family, near the Giant's Causeway, with one of those terrible seas and skies which only Thomson can paint. Found Scrope there, improving a picture of his own, an Italian scene in Calabria. He is, I think, one of the very best amateur painters I ever saw—Sir George Beaumont scarcely excepted.

'I would not write to-day after I came home. I will not say could not, for it is not true; but I was lazy; felt the desire *far niente*, which is the sign of one's mind being at ease. I read The English in Italy, which is a clever book. Byron used to kick and frisk more contemptuously against the literary gravity and slang than any one I ever knew who had climbed so high. Then, it is true, I never knew any one climb so high—and before you despise the eminence, carrying people along with you as convinced that you are not playing the fox and the grapes, you must be at the top. Moore told me some delightful stories of him. * * * *[1] He wrote from impulse, never from effort; and therefore I have always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me. We have many men of high poetical talent, but none, I think, of that ever-gushing and perennial fountain of natural waters.

[1] Here follow several anecdotes, since published in Moore's Life of Byron.

'Mr. Laidlaw dined with us. Says Mr. Gibson told him he would dispose of my affairs, were it any but Sir W. S. No doubt, so should I. I am well-nigh doing so at any rate. But, *fortuna juvante!* much may be achieved. At worst, the prospect is not very discouraging to one who wants little. Methinks I have been like Burns's poor labourer,

> So constantly in Ruin's sight,
> The view o't gives me little fright.'

CHAPTER LXVII

Extract from James Ballantyne's Memoranda—Anecdote from Mr. Skene—Letters of January and February 1826, *to J. G. Lockhart, Mr. Morritt, and Lady Davy—Result of the embarrassments of Constable, Hurst, and Ballantyne—Resolution of Sir Walter Scott—Malachi Malagrowther.*

1826

I INTERRUPT, for a moment, Sir Walter's Diary, to introduce a few collateral illustrations of the period embraced in the foregoing chapter. When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday the 16th of January, he found (as we have seen) that Hurst & Co. had dishonoured a bill of Constable's; and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr. Skene of Rubislaw's. Mr. Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gaily as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting, he whispered, 'Skene, I have something to speak to you about; be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament House to-morrow.' When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said, 'My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar.' He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connexion with the three houses,

whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added, 'Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose.' When Sunday came, he reported accordingly, that, in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business—to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter—he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day.

The reader may be curious to see what account James Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows:—'On the evening of the 16th, I received from Mr. Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned—but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked, "Well, what is the actual step we must first take—I suppose we must do something?" I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do—refuse payment—to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words, "Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you."'

After the ample details of Scott's Diary, it would be idle to quote here many of his private letters in January 1826; but I must give two of those addressed to myself,—one written at Abbotsford on the 15th, the day before he started for Edinburgh to receive the fatal intelligence—the other on the 20th. It will be seen that I had been so very unwise as to intermingle with the account of one of my painful interviews with Constable, an expression of

surprise at the nature of Sir Walter's commercial engagements which had then for the first time been explained to me; and every reader will, I am sure, appreciate the gentleness of the reply, however unsatisfactory he may consider it as regards the main fact in question.

'*To John Lockhart, Esq., 25 Pall Mall, London.*

'ABBOTSFORD, *January* 15, 1826.

'MY DEAR LOCKHART—I have both your packets. I have been quite well since my attack, only for some time very downhearted with the calomel and another nasty stuff they call hyoscyamus—and to say truth, the silence of my own household, which used to be merry at this season.

'I enclose the article on Pepys. It is totally uncorrected, so I wish of course much to see it in proof if possible, as it must be dreadfully inaccurate; the opiate was busy with my brain when the beginning was written, and as James Ballantyne complains woefully, so will your printer, I doubt. The subject is like a good sirloin, which requires only to be basted with its own drippings. I had little trouble of research or reference; perhaps I have made it too long, or introduced too many extracts—if so, use the pruning-knife, hedgebill, or axe, *ad libitum*. You know I don't care a curse about what I write, or what becomes of it.

'To-morrow, snow permitting, we go in to Edinburgh; meantime ye can expect no news from this place. I saw poor Chiefswood the other day. Cock-a-pistol[1] sends his humble remembrances. Commend me a thousand times to the magnanimous Johnnie. I live in hopes he will not greatly miss Marion and the red cow. Don't let him forget poor ha-papa.—Farewell, my dear Lockhart: never trouble yourself about writing to me, for I suspect you have enough of that upon hand.

'Pardon my sending you such an unwashed, uncombed

[1] A gardener, by name James Scott, who lived at a place called popularly Cock-a-pistol, because the battle of Melrose (A.D. 1526) began there.

thing as the enclosed. I really can't see now to read my own hand, so bad have my eyes or my fingers or both become.—Always yours affectionately,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To the Same.*

'EDINBURGH, *January* 20, 1826.

'MY DEAR LOCKHART—I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements—(the better thing almost of the two)—to make good all claims upon Ballantyne and Co.; and even supposing that neither Hurst and Co. nor Constable and Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute—even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add, that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more—or £2000—or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and must now pay my own. If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier, nothing of all this would have happened; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow—it is an infirmity of nature.

'I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

'It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connexion with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better—excluded from the bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was

not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and—it was a price that made men's hair stand on end—£1000 for Marmion. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much to Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst and Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15s. in the pound, I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

'I have had visits from all the monied people, offering their purses—and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measure I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own—for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *conn*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose. A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000,[1] which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I would have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'éclat;* but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as you ever saw me, and work-

[1] Sir Walter never knew the name of this munificent person.

ing at Woodstock like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best—it will be well.

'Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song[1] and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship.—Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.'

From Sir Walter's letters of the same period, to friends out of his own family, I select the following:—

'*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., etc., Marine Terrace, Brighton.*

'EDINBURGH, *6th February* 1826.

'MY DEAR MORRITT—It is very true I have been, and am, in danger of a pecuniary loss, and probably a very large one, which, in the uncertainty, I look at as to the full extent, being the manly way of calculating such matters, since one may be better, but can hardly be worse. I can't say I feel overjoyed at losing a large sum of hard-earned money in a most unexpected manner, for all men considered Constable's people secure as the Bank; yet, as I have obtained an arrangement of payment convenient for everybody concerned, and easy for myself, I cannot say that I care much about the matter. Some economical restrictions I will make; and it happened oddly that they were such as Lady Scott and myself had almost determined upon without this compulsion. Abbotsford will henceforth be our only establishment; and during the time I must be

[1] 'Up with the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee.'

in town, I will take my bed at the Albyn Club. We shall also break off the rather excessive hospitality to which we were exposed, and no longer stand host and hostess to all that do pilgrimage to Melrose. Then I give up an expensive farm, which I always hated, and turn all my odds and ends into cash. I do not reckon much on my literary exertions—I mean in proportion to former success —because popular taste may fluctuate. But with a moderate degree of the favour which I have always had, my time my own, and my mind unplagued about other things, I may boldly promise myself soon to get the better of this blow.

'In these circumstances, I should be unjust and ungrateful to ask or accept the pity of my friends. I, for one, do not see there is much occasion for making moan about it. My womankind will be the greater sufferers, —yet even they look cheerily forward; and, for myself, the blowing off my hat in a stormy day has given me more uneasiness.

'I envy your Brighton party and your fine weather. When I was at Abbotsford, the mercury was down at six or seven in the morning more than once. I am hammering away at a bit of a story from the old affair of the *diablerie* at Woodstock in the Long Parliament times. I don't like it much. I am obliged to hamper my fanatics greatly too much to make them effective; but I make the sacrifice on principle: so, perhaps, I shall deserve good success in other parts of the work. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have written a volume in exactly fifteen days. To be sure, I permitted no interruptions. But then I took exercise, and for ten days of the fifteen attended the Court of Session from two to four hours every day. This is nothing, however, to writing Ivanhoe when I had the actual cramp in my stomach; but I have no idea of these things preventing a man from doing what he has a mind. My love to all the party at Brighton— fireside party I had almost said, but you scorn my words —seaside party then be it. Lady Scott and Anne join in kindest love. I must close my letter, for one of the con-

sequences of our misfortunes is, that we dine every day at half-past four o'clock; which premature hour arises, I suppose, from sorrow being hungry as well as thirsty. One most laughable part of our tragic comedy was, that every friend in the world came formally, just as they do here when a relation dies, thinking that the eclipse of *les beaux yeux de ma cassette* was perhaps a loss as deserving of consolation.

'We heard an unpleasant report that your nephew was ill. I am glad to see from your letter it is only the lady, and in the right way; and I hope, *Scotticè loquens*, she will be worse before she is better. This mistake is something like the Irish blunder in Faulkner's Journal, "For *his* Grace the Duchess of Devonshire was safely delivered —read *her* Grace the Duke of Devonshire, etc."—Always yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*P.S.*—Will you do me a favour? Set fire to the Chinese stables; and if it embrace the whole of the Pavilion, it will rid me of a great eye-sore.'

'*To Lady Davy, 26 Park Street, London.*

'*6th February* 1826.

'MY DEAR LADY DAVY—A very few minutes since, I received your kind letter, and answer it in all frankness, and, in Iago's words, "I am *hurt*, ma'am, but not killed" —nor even kilt. I have made so much by literature, that, even should this loss fall in its whole extent, and we now make preparations for the worst, it will not break, and has not broken, my sleep. If I have good luck, I may be as rich again as ever; if not, I shall have still far more than many of the most deserving people in Britain —soldiers, sailors, statesmen, or men of literature.

'I am much obliged to you for your kindness to Sophia, who has tact, and great truth of character, I believe. She will wish to take her company, as the scandal said ladies liked their wine, little and good; and I need not say I shall be greatly obliged by your continued

notice of one you have known now for a long time. I am, between ourselves, afraid of the little boy; he is terribly delicate in constitution, and so twined about the parents' hearts, that—— But it is needless croaking; what is written on our foreheads at our birth shall be accomplished. So far I am a good Moslem.

'Lockhart is, I think, in his own line, and therefore I do not regret his absence, though, in our present arrangement, as my wife and Anne propose to remain all the year round at Abbotsford, I shall be solitary enough in my lodgings. But I always loved being a bear and sucking my paws in solitude, better than being a lion and ramping for the amusement of others; and as I propose to slam the door in the face of all and sundry for these three years to come, and neither eat nor give to eat, I shall come forth bearish enough, should I live to make another avatar. Seriously, I intend to receive nobody, old and intimate friends excepted, at Abbotsford this season, for it cost me much more in time than otherwise.

'I beg my kindest compliments to Sir Humphry; and tell him Ill Luck, that direful chemist, never put into his crucible a more indissoluble piece of stuff than your affectionate cousin and sincere well-wisher,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

I offer no cold comments on the strength of character which Sir Walter Scott exhibited in the crisis of his calamities. But for the revelations of his Diary, it would never have been known to his most intimate friends, or even to his own affectionate children, what struggles it cost him to reach the lofty serenity of mind which was reflected in all his outward conduct and demeanour.

As yet, however, he had hardly prepared himself for the extent to which Constable's debts exceeded his assets. The obligations of that house amounted, on a final reckoning, to £256,000; those of Hurst and Robinson to somewhere about £300,000. The former paid, ultimately, only 2s. 9d. in the pound; the latter about 1s. 3d.

The firm of James Ballantyne and Co. might have

allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the bookselling concerns did, for all its obligations;—but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in the manner commonly adopted by commercial insolvents, the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of Ballantyne and Co.—(whose claims, including sheafs of bills of all descriptions, amounted to £117,000)—would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed; they would have had a right to his liferent at Abbotsford, among other things—and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January 1825. At first, some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt, that the result of such an examination in January 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the

rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a large extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect :—

The glory dies not, and the grief is past.[1]

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House ; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of £5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England ; and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious curtailment of their profits ; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh banking-houses had just been exhibiting toward himself ; and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bilis* which, as the Diary shows, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three Letters of Malachi Malagrowther, which

[1] This fine line is from a sonnet on Sir Walter Scott's death, by the late Sir Egerton Brydges.

appeared first in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr. Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by 'the Black Hussar of Literature.'

These diatribes produced in Scotland a sensation not, perhaps, inferior to that of the Drapier's letters in Ireland; a greater one, certainly, than any political tract had excited in the British public at large since the appearance of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. They were answered most elaborately and acutely in the London Courier (then the semi-official organ of Lord Liverpool's Government) by Sir Walter's friend, the Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Croker, who, perhaps, hazarded, in the heat of his composition, a few personal allusions that might as well have been spared, and which might have tempted a less good-natured antagonist to a fiery rejoinder. Meeting, however, followed meeting, and petition on petition came up with thousands of signatures; and the Ministers erelong found that the opposition, of which Malachi had led the van, was, in spite of all their own speeches and Mr. Croker's essays, too strong and too rapidly strengthening to be safely encountered. The Scotch part of the measure was dropped; and Scott, having carried his practical object, was not at all disposed to persist in a controversy which, if farther pursued, could scarcely, as he foresaw, fail to interrupt the kindly feelings that Croker and he had for many years entertained for each other, and also to aggravate and prolong, unnecessarily, the resentment with which several of his friends in the Cabinet had regarded his unlooked-for appearance as a hostile agitator.

I believe, with these hints, the reader is sufficiently prepared for resuming Sir Walter's Diary.

CHAPTER LXVIII

Diary resumed—Anecdote of Culloden—Letter from Mackintosh — Exhibition of Pictures — Modern Painters — Habits of Composition — Glengarry — Advocates' Library — Negotiations with Creditors—First Letter of Malachi Malagrowther — Chronique de Jacques de Lalain — Progress of Woodstock and Buonaparte—Novels by Galt, Miss Austen, and Lady Morgan —Second and third Epistles of Malachi—Departure from Castle Street.

FEB. AND MARCH 1826

DIARY

'*EDINBURGH, February* 10.—Went through, for a new day, the task of buttoning, which seems to me somehow to fill up more of my morning than usual—not, certainly, that such is the case, but that my mind attends to the process, having so little left to hope or fear. The half-hour between waking and rising has all my life proved propitious to any task which was exercising my invention. When I got over any knotty difficulty in a story, or have had in former times to fill up a passage in a poem, it was always when I first opened my eyes that the desired ideas thronged upon me. This is so much the case, that I am in the habit of relying upon it, and saying to myself, when I am at a loss, "Never mind; we shall have it at seven o'clock to-morrow morning." If I have forgot a circumstance, or a name, or a copy of verses, it is the same thing. I think the first

hour of the morning is also favourable to the bodily strength. Among other feats, when I was a young man, I was able at times to lift a smith's anvil with one hand, by what is called the *horn*—that projecting piece of iron on which things are beaten to turn them round. But I could only do this before breakfast. It required my full strength, undiminished by the least exertion, and those who choose to try will find the feat no easy one. This morning I had some new ideas respecting Woodstock, which will make the story better. The devil of a difficulty is, that one puzzles the skein in order to excite curiosity, and then cannot disentangle it for the satisfaction of the prying fiend they have raised.—I have a prettily expressed letter of condolence from Sir James Mackintosh.[1] Yesterday I had an

[1] This letter is so honourable to the writer, as well as to Sir Walter, that I am tempted to insert it in a note :—

'*To Sir W. Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.*

'CADOGAN PLACE, *Feb.* 7, 1826.

'MY DEAR SIR—Having been sailing on Windermere when Lord Gifford passed the Lakes, and almost constantly confined since my return to town, I did not hear till two days ago of your very kind message, which, if I had received it in the north, I should probably have answered in person. I do not know that I should now have troubled you with written thanks for what is so natural to you as an act of courtesy and hospitality, if I were not in hopes that you might consider it as excuse enough for an indulgence of inclination which might otherwise be thought intrusive.

'No man living has given pleasure to so many persons as you have done, and you must be assured that great multitudes who never saw you, in every quarter of the world, will regret the slightest disturbance of your convenience. But, as I have observed that the express declaration of one individual sometimes makes more impression than the strongest assurance of the sentiments of multitudes, I venture to say that I most sincerely lament that any untoward circumstances should, even for a time, interrupt the indulgence of your taste and your liberal enjoyments. I am sorry that Scotland should, for a moment, lose the very peculiar distinction of having the honours of the country done to visitors by the person at the head of our literature. Above all, I am sorry that a fortune earned by genius and expended so generously, should be for the shortest time shaken by the general calamities.

'Those dispositions of yours which most quicken the fellow-feelings

anecdote from old Sir James Steuart Denham,[1] which is worth writing down. His uncle, Lord Elcho, was, as is well known, engaged in the affair of 1745. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of matters from beginning to end. But after the left wing of the Highlanders was repulsed and broken at Culloden, Elcho rode up to the Chevalier and told him all was lost, and that nothing remained except to charge at the head of two thousand men, who were still unbroken, and either turn the fate of the day or die sword in hand, as became his pretensions. The Chevalier gave him some evasive answer, and turning his horse's head, rode off the field. Lord Elcho called after him (I write his very words), "There you go for a damned cowardly Italian," and never would see him again, though he lost his property and remained an exile in the cause. Lord Elcho left two copies of his memoirs, one with Sir James Steuart's family, one with Lord Wemyss. This is better evidence than the romance of Chevalier Johnstone; and I have little doubt it is true. Yet it is no proof of the Prince's cowardice, though it shows him to have been no John of Gaunt. Princes are constantly surrounded with people who hold up their own *life* and

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of others will best console you. I have heard with delight that your composure and cheerfulness have already comforted those who are most affectionately interested in you. What I heard of your happy temper in this way reminded me of Warburton's fine character of Bayle—"He had a soul superior to the attacks of fortune, and a heart practised to the best philosophy." You have expended your fortune too well not to be consoled for a temporary suspension of its produce; you have your genius, your fame, and, what is better than either, your kind and cheerful nature.

'I trust so much to your good-natured indulgence, that I hope you will pardon me for joining my sincere but very humble voice to the admiration and sympathy of Europe.—I am, my dear Sir, yours most truly, J. Mackintosh.'

[1] General Sir James Steuart Denham of Coltness, Baronet, Colonel of the Scots Greys. His father, the celebrated political economist, took part in the Rebellion of 1745, and was long afterwards an exile. The reader is no doubt acquainted with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Letters, addressed to him and his wife Lady Frances. [Sir James died at Cheltenham in August 1839, aged 95.]

safety to them as by far the most important stake in any contest; and this is a doctrine in which conviction is easily received. Such an eminent person finds everybody's advice, save here and there that of a desperate Elcho, recommend obedience to the natural instinct of self-preservation, which very often men of inferior situations find it difficult to combat, when all the world are crying to them to get on and be damned, instead of encouraging them to run away. At Prestonpans the Chevalier offered to lead the van, and he was with the second line, which, during that brief affair, followed the first very close. Johnstone's own account, carefully read, brings him within a pistol-shot of the first line. At the same time Charles Edward had not a head or heart for great things, notwithstanding his daring adventure; and the Irish officers, by whom he was guided, were poor creatures. Lord George Murray was the soul of the undertaking.[1]

'*February* 11.—Court sat till half-past one. A man, calling himself * * * * of * * * * *, writes to me, expressing sympathy for my misfortunes, and offering me half the profits of what, if I understand him right, is a patent medicine, to which I suppose he expects me to stand trumpeter. He endeavours to get over my objections to accepting his liberality (supposing me to entertain them) by assuring me his conduct is founded on "*a sage selfishness!*" This is diverting enough. I suppose the Commissioners of Police will next send me a letter of condolence, begging my acceptance of a broom, a shovel, and a scavenger's greatcoat, and assuring me that they had appointed me to all the emoluments of a well-frequented crossing. It would be doing more than they have done of late for the cleanliness of the streets, which, witness my

[1] 'Had Prince Charles slept during the whole of the expedition,' says the Chevalier Johnstone, 'and allowed Lord George Murray to act for him according to his own judgment, there is every reason for supposing he would have found the crown of Great Britain on his head when he awoke.'—Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745, etc., London, 1810, 4to, p. 140.

shoes, are in a piteous pickle. I thanked the selfish sage with due decorum—for what purpose can anger serve? I remember once before, a mad woman, from about Alnwick, by name * * * *, baited me with letters and plans—first for charity for herself or some *protégé*—I gave my guinea —then she wanted to have half the profits of a novel which I was to publish under my name and auspices. She sent me the manuscript, and a *moving* tale it was, for some of the scenes lay in the *Cabinet à l'eau*. I declined the partnership. Lastly, my fair correspondent insisted I was a lover of speculation, and would be much profited by going shares in a patent medicine which she had invented for the benefit of little babes. I dreaded to have anything to do with such a Herod-like affair, and begged to decline the honour of her correspondence in future. I should have thought the thing a quiz but that the novel was real and substantial. Sir Alexander Don called, and we had a good laugh together.

'*February* 12.—Having ended the second volume of Woodstock last night, I had to begin the third this morning. Now I have not the slightest idea how the story is to be wound up to a catastrophe. I am just in the same case as I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger. I always pushed for the pleasantest route, and either found or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing. I never could lay down a plan—or, having laid it down, I never could adhere to it; the action of composition always extended some passages, and abridged or omitted others; and personages were rendered important or insignificant, not according to their agency in the original conception of the piece, but according to the success, or otherwise, with which I was able to bring them out. I only tried to make that which I was actually writing diverting and interesting, leaving the rest to fate. I have been often amused with the critics distinguishing some passages as particularly laboured, when the pen passed over the whole as fast as it could move, and the eye never again saw them,

except in proof. Verse I write twice, and sometimes three times over. This *hab nab at a venture* is a perilous style, I grant, but I cannot help it. When I strain my mind to ideas which are purely imaginative—for argument is a different thing—it seems to me that the sun leaves the landscape—that I think away the whole vivacity of my original conception, and that the results are cold, tame and spiritless. It is the difference between a written oration and one bursting from the unpremeditated exertions of the speaker, which have always something the air of enthusiasm and inspiration. I would not have young authors imitate my carelessness, however.

'Read a few pages of Will D'Avenant, who was fond of having it supposed that Shakspeare intrigued with his mother. I think the pretension can only be treated as Phaeton was, according to Fielding's farce—

> Besides, by all the village boys I'm shamed:
> You the sun's son, you rascal?—you be damn'd!

Egad—I'll put that into Woodstock. It might come well from the old admirer of Shakspeare. Then Fielding's lines were not written. What then?—it is an anachronism for some sly rogue to detect. Besides, it is easy to swear they were written, and that Fielding adopted them from tradition.[1]

'*February* 13.—The Institution for the encouragement of the Fine Arts opens to-day with a handsome entertainment in the Exhibition-room, as at Somerset House. It strikes me that the direction given by amateurs and professors to their *protégés* and pupils, who aspire to be artists, is upon a pedantic and false principle. All the fine arts have it for their highest and most legitimate end and purpose, to affect the human passions, or smooth and alleviate, for a time, the near unquiet feelings of the mind—to excite wonder, or terror, or pleasure, or emotion of some kind or other. It often happens that, in the very

[1] See the couplet, and the apology, in Woodstock—Waverley Novels, vol. xl. p. 134.

rise and origin of these arts, as in the instance of Homer, the principal object is obtained in a degree not equalled by any successor. But there is a degree of execution, which, in more refined times, the poet or musician begins to study, which gives a value of its own to their productions, of a different kind from the rude strength of their predecessors. Poetry becomes complicated in its rules—music learned in its cadences and harmonies—rhetoric subtle in its periods. There s more given to the labour of executing—less attained by the effect produced. Still the nobler and popular end of these arts is not forgotten ; and if we have some productions too learned—too *recherchés* for public feeling—we have, every now and then, music that electrifies a whole assembly, eloquence which shakes the forum, and poetry which carries men up to the third heaven. But in painting it is different ; it is all become a mystery, the secret of which is lodged in a few connoisseurs, whose object is not to praise the works of such painters as produce effect on mankind at large, but to class them according to their proficiency in the inferior rules of the art, which, though most necessary to be taught and learned, should yet only be considered as the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, the steps by which the higher and ultimate object of a great popular effect is to be attained. They have all embraced the very style of criticism which induced Michael Angelo to call some Pope a poor creature, when, turning his attention from the general effect of a noble statue, his Holiness began to criticise the hem of the robe. This seems to me the cause of the decay of this delightful art, especially in history, its noblest branch. As I speak to myself, I may say that a painting should, to be excellent, have something to say to the mind of a man, like myself, well educated, and susceptible of those feelings which anything strongly recalling natural emotion is likely to inspire. But how seldom do I see anything that moves me much ! Wilkie, the far more than Teniers of Scotland, certainly gave many new ideas. So does Will Allan, though overwhelmed with their remarks about colouring and grouping, against which they are not willing to place

his general and original merits. Landseer's dogs were the most magnificent things I ever saw—leaping, and bounding, and grinning on the canvas. Leslie has great powers; and the scenes from Molière by Newton are excellent. Yet painting wants a regenerator—some one who will sweep the cobwebs out of his head before he takes the pallet, as Chantrey has done in the sister art. At present we are painting pictures from the ancients, as authors in the days of Louis Quatorze wrote epic poems according to the recipe of Dacier and Co. The poor reader or spectator has no remedy; the compositions are *secundum artem;* and if he does not like them, he is no judge, that's all.

'*February* 14.—I had a call from Glengarry yesterday, as kind and friendly as usual.[1] This gentleman is a kind of Quixote in our age, having retained, in their full extent, the whole feelings of clanship and chieftainship, elsewhere so long abandoned. He seems to have lived a century too late, and to exist, in a state of complete law and order, like a Glengarry of old, whose will was law to his sept. Warm-hearted, generous, friendly, he is beloved by those who know him, and his efforts are unceasing to show kindness to those of his clan who are disposed fully to admit his pretensions. To dispute them, is to incur his resentment, which has sometimes broken out in acts of violence which have brought him into collision with the law. To me he is a treasure, as being full of information as to the history of his own clan, and the manners and customs of the Highlanders in general. Strong, active, and muscular, he follows the chase of the deer for days and nights together, sleeping in his plaid when darkness overtakes him. The number of his singular exploits would fill a volume; for, as his pretensions are high, and not always willingly yielded to, he is every now and then giving rise to some rumour. He is, on many of these occasions, as much sinned against as sinning; for men, knowing his temper, sometimes provoke

[1] Colonel Ranaldson Macdonell of Glengarry. He died in January 1828.

him, conscious that Glengarry, from his character for violence, will always be put in the wrong by the public. I have seen him behave in a very manly manner when thus tempted. He has of late prosecuted a quarrel, ridiculous enough in the present day, to have himself admitted and recognised as Chief of the whole Clan Ranald, or surname of Macdonald. The truth seems to be, that the present Clanranald is not descended from a legitimate chieftain of the tribe; for, having accomplished a revolution in the 16th century, they adopted a Tanist, or Captain, that is, a Chief not in the direct line of succession—namely, a certain Ian Moidart, or John of Moidart, who took the title of Captain of Clanranald, with all the powers of Chief; and even Glengarry's ancestor recognised them as chiefs *de facto*, if not *de jure*. The fact is, that this elective power was, in cases of insanity, imbecility, or the like, exercised by the Celtic tribes; and though Ian Moidart was no chief by birth, yet by election he became so, and transmitted his power to his descendant, as would King William III., if he had had any. So it is absurd to set up the *jus sanguinis* now, which Glengarry's ancestors did not, or could not, make good, when it was a right worth combating for.—I wrought out my full task yesterday.

'Saw Cadell as I returned from the Court. He seemed dejected, and gloomy about the extent of stock of novels, etc. on hand. He infected me with his want of spirits, and I almost wish my wife had not asked Mr. Scrope and Charles K. Sharpe for this day. But the former sent such loads of game that Lady Scott's gratitude became ungovernable.[1] I have not seen a creature at dinner since

[1] I transcribe a letter from Sir Walter, on an occasion of this sort, from the first chapter of Mr. Scrope's 'Art of Deer-Stalking':

> Thanks, dear sir, for your venison, for finer or fatter
> Never roam'd in a forest, or smoked in a platter.

'Your superb haunch arrived in excellent time to feast a new married couple, the Douglases of M——, and was pronounced by far the finest that could by possibility have been seen in Teviotdale since Chevy Chase. I did not venture on the carving, being warned both by your hints, and the example of old Robert Sinclair, who used to say that he had thirty friends during a fortnight's residence at Harrowgate,

the direful 17th of January, except my own family and Mr. Laidlaw. The love of solitude increases by indulgence; I hope it will not diverge into misanthropy. It does not mend the matter that this is the first day that a ticket for sale is on my house, poor No. 39. One gets accustomed even to stone walls, and the place suited me very well. All our furniture, too, is to go—a hundred little articles that seemed to me connected with all the happier years of my life. It is a sorry business. But *sursum corda.*

'My two friends came as expected, also Missie, and stayed till half-past ten. Promised Sharpe the set of Piranesi's views in the dining-parlour. They belonged to my uncle, so I do not like to sell them.

'*February* 15.—Yesterday I did not write a line of Woodstock. Partly, I was a little out of spirits, though that would not have hindered. Partly, I wanted to wait for some new ideas—a sort of collecting of straw to make bricks of. Partly, I was a little too far beyond the press. I cannot pull well in long traces, when the draught is too far behind me. I love to have the press thumping, clattering, and banging in my rear; it creates the necessity which almost always makes me work best. Needs must when the devil drives—and drive he does even according to the letter. I must work to-day, however.—Attended a meeting of the Faculty about our new library. I spoke—saying that I hoped we would now at length act upon a general plan, and look forward to commencing upon such a scale as might secure us at least for a century against the petty and partial management, which we have hitherto thought sufficient, of fitting up one room after another. Disconnected and distant, these have been costing large sums of money from time to time, all now thrown away. We are now to have space enough for a very large range of buildings, which we may execute in a simple taste,

and lost them all in the carving of one haunch of venison; so I put Lockhart on the duty, and, as the haunch was too large to require strict economy, he hacked and hewed it well enough.'

leaving Government to ornament them if they shall think proper—otherwise to be plain, modest, and handsome, and capable of being executed by degrees, and in such portions as convenience may admit of.—Poor James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, came to advise with me about his affairs,—he is sinking under the times; having no assistance to give him, my advice I fear will be of little service. I am sorry for him if that would help him, especially as, by his own account, a couple of hundred pounds would carry him on.

'*February* 16.—"Misfortune's growling bark"[1] comes louder and louder. By assigning my whole property to trustees for behoof of creditors, with two works in progress and nigh publication, and with all my future literary labours, I conceived I was bringing into the field a large fund of payment, which could not exist without my exertions, and that thus far I was entitled to a corresponding degree of indulgence. I therefore supposed, on selling this house, and various other property, and on receiving the price of Woodstock and Napoleon, that they would give me leisure to make other exertions, and be content with the rents of Abbotsford, without attempting a sale. This would have been the more reasonable, as the very printing of these works must amount to a large sum, of which they will touch the profits. In the course of this delay I supposed I was to have the chance of getting some insight both into Constable's affairs and those of Hurst and Robinson. Nay, employing these houses, under precautions, to sell the works, the publisher's profit would have come in to pay part of their debt. But Gibson last night came in after dinner, and gave me to understand that the Bank of Scotland see this in a different point of view, and consider my contribution of the produce of past, present, and future labours, as compensated *in full* by their accepting of the trust-deed, instead of pursuing the mode of sequestration, and placing me in the Gazette. They therefore expect the trustees to commence a lawsuit

[1] Burns's Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.

to reduce the marriage-settlement, which settles the estate upon Walter; thus loading me with a most expensive suit, and I suppose selling library and whatever else they can lay hold on.

'Now this seems unequal measure, and would besides of itself totally destroy any power of fancy—of genius, if it deserves the name, which may remain to me. A man cannot write in the House of Correction; and this species of *peine forte et dure* which is threatened would render it impossible for one to help himself or others. So I told Gibson I had my mind made up as far back as the 24th of January, not to suffer myself to be harder pressed than law would press me. If this great commercial company, through whose hands I have directed so many thousands, think they are right in taking every advantage and giving none, it must be my care to see that they take none but what the law gives them. If they take the sword of the law, I must lay hold of the shield. If they are determined to consider me as an irretrievable bankrupt, they have no title to object to my settling upon the usual terms which the Statute requires. They probably are of opinion that I will be ashamed to do this by applying publicly for a sequestration. Now, my feelings are different. I am ashamed to owe debts I cannot pay; but I am not ashamed of being classed with those to whose rank I belong. The disgrace is in being an actual bankrupt, not in being made a legal one. I had like to have been too hasty in this matter. I must have a clear understanding that I am to be benefited or indulged in some way, if I bring in two such funds as those works in progress, worth certainly from £10,000 to £15,000.

'*February* 17.—Slept sound, for nature repays herself for the vexation the mind sometimes gives her. This morning put interlocutors on several Sheriff-court processes from Selkirkshire. Gibson came to-night to say that he had spoken at full length with Alexander Monypenny, proposed as trustee on the part of the Bank of Scotland, and found him decidedly in favour of the

most moderate measures, and taking burden on himself that the Bank would proceed with such lenity as might enable me to have some time and opportunity to clear these affairs out. I repose trust in Mr. M. entirely. His father, Colonel Monypenny, was my early friend, kind and hospitable to me when I was a mere boy. He had much of old General Withers about him, as expressed in Pope's epitaph—

> A worth in youth approved,
> A soft humanity in age beloved!

His son David, and a younger brother, Frank, a soldier, who perished by drowning on a boating party from Gibraltar, were my schoolfellows; and with the survivor, now Lord Pitmilly, I have always kept up a friendly intercourse. Of this gentleman, on whom my fortunes are to depend, I know little. He was Colin Mackenzie's partner in business while my friend pursued it, and he speaks highly of him: that's a great deal. He is secretary to the Pitt Club, and we have had all our lives the habit *idem sentire de republica:* that's much too. Lastly, he is a man of perfect honour and reputation; and I have nothing to ask which such a man would not either grant or convince me was unreasonable. I have, to be sure, something of a constitutional and hereditary obstinacy; but it is in me a dormant quality. Convince my understanding, and I am perfectly docile; stir my passions by coldness or affronts, and the devil would not drive me from my purpose. Let me record, I have striven against this besetting sin. When I was a boy, and on foot expeditions, as we had many, no creature could be so indifferent which way our course was directed, and I acquiesced in what any one proposed; but if I was once driven to make a choice, and felt piqued in honour to maintain my proposition, I have broken off from the whole party, rather than yield to any one. Time has sobered this pertinacity of mind; but it still exists, and I must be on my guard against it. It is the same with me in politics. In general I care very little about the matter,

and from year's end to year's end have scarce a thought connected with them, except to laugh at the fools, who think to make themselves great men out of little by swaggering in the rear of a party. But either actually important events, or such as seemed so by their close neighbourhood to me, have always hurried me off my feet, and made me, as I have sometimes regretted, more forward and more violent than those who had a regular jog-trot way of busying themselves in public matters. Good luck; for had I lived in troublesome times, and chanced to be on the unhappy side, I had been hanged to a certainty. What I have always remarked has been, that many who have hallooed me on at public meetings, and so forth, have quietly left me to the odium which a man known to the public always has more than his own share of; while, on the other hand, they were easily successful in pressing before me, who never pressed forward at all, when there was any distribution of public favours or the like. I am horribly tempted to interfere in this business of altering the system of banks in Scotland; and yet I know that if I can attract any notice, I will offend my English friends, without propitiating our doom in Scotland. I will think of it till to-morrow. It is making myself of too much importance, after all.

'*February* 18.—I set about Malachi Malagrowther's Letter on the late disposition to change everything in Scotland to an English model, but without resolving about the publication. They do treat us very provokingly.

O Land of *Cakes!* said the *Northern* bard,
Though all the world betrays thee,
One faithful pen thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee.[1]

'*February* 19.—Finished my letter (Malachi Malagrowther) this morning, and sent it to James B., who is to call with the result this forenoon. I am not very

[1] A parody on Moore's *Minstrel Boy*.

anxious to get on with Woodstock. I want to see what Constable's people mean to do when they have their trustee. For an unfinished work they must treat with the author. It is the old story of the varnish spread over the picture, which nothing but the artist's own hand could remove. A finished work might be seized under some legal pretence.

'Being troubled with thick-coming fancies, and a slight palpitation of the heart, I have been reading the Chronicle of the Good Knight Messire Jacques de Lalain —curious, but dull, from the constant repetition of the same species of combats in the same style and phrase. It is like washing bushels of sand for a grain of gold. It passes the time, however, especially in that listless mood when your mind is half on your book, half on something else. You catch something to arrest the attention every now and then, and what you miss is not worth going back upon; idle man's studies, in short. Still, things occur to one. Something might be made of a tale of chivalry,—taken from the Passage of Arms, which Jacques de Lalain maintained for the first day of every month for a twelvemonth.[1] The first mention perhaps of red-hot balls appears in the siege of Oudenarde by the Citizens of Ghent—Chronique, p. 293. This would be light summer work.

'J. B. came and sat an hour. I led him to talk of Woodstock; and, to say truth, his approbation did me much good. I am aware it *may*, nay, *must* be partial; yet is he Tom Tell-truth, and totally unable to disguise his real feelings. I think I make no habit of feeding on praise, and despise those whom I see greedy for it, as much as I should an underbred fellow who, after eating a cherry-tart, proceeded to lick the plate. But when one is flagging, a little praise (if it can be had genuine and unadulterated by flattery, which is as difficult to come by as the genuine mountain-dew) is a cordial after all. So now—*vamos corazon*—let us atone for the loss of the morning.

[1] This hint was taken up in Count Robert of Paris.

'*February* 20.—Yesterday, though late in beginning, I nearly finished my task, which is six of my close pages, about thirty pages of print, a full and uninterrupted day's work. To-day I have already written four, and with some confidence. Thus does flattery or praise oil the wheels. It is but two o'clock. Skene was here remonstrating against my taking apartments at the Albyn Club,[1] and recommending that I should rather stay with them. I told him that was altogether impossible. I hoped to visit them often, but for taking a permanent residence, I was altogether the Country Mouse, and voted for

A hollow tree,
A crust of bread and liberty.[2]

The chain of friendship, however bright, does not stand the attrition of constant close contact.

'*February* 21.—Corrected the proofs of Malachi this morning; it may fall dead, and there will be a squib lost; it may chance to light on some ingredients of national feeling and set folk's beards in a blaze—and so much the better if it does. I mean, better for Scotland—not a whit for me. Attended the hearing in Parliament House till near four o'clock, so I shall do little to-night, for I am tired and sleepy. One person talking for a long time, whether in pulpit or at the bar, or anywhere else, unless the interest be great, and the eloquence of the highest character, sets me to sleep. I impudently lean my head on my hand in the Court, and take my nap without shame. The Lords may keep awake and mind their own affairs. *Quod supra nos nihil ad nos.* These clerks' stools are certainly as easy seats as are in Scotland, those of the Barons of the Exchequer always excepted.

[1] This was a club-house on the London plan, in Prince's Street, a little eastward from the Mound. On its dissolution soon afterwards, Sir W. was elected by acclamation into the *elder* society called the *New Club*, who had then their house in St. Andrew's Square.

[2] Pope's Imitation of Horace, B. II. Sat. 6.

'*February* 22.—Ballantyne breakfasted, and is to negotiate about Malachi with Blackwood. It reads not amiss; and if I can get a few guineas for it, I shall not be ashamed to take them; for, paying Lady Scott, I have just left between £3 and £4 for any necessary occasion, and my salary does not become due until 20th March, and the expense of removing, etc., is to be provided for:

But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?

The mere scarcity of money (so that actual wants are provided) is not poverty—it is the bitter draught to owe money which we cannot pay. Laboured fairly at Woodstock to-day, but principally in revising and adding to Malachi, of which an edition as a pamphlet is anxiously desired. I have lugged in my old friend Cardrona[1]—I hope it will not be thought unkindly. The Banks are anxious to have it published. They were lately exercising lenity towards me, and if I can benefit them, it will be an instance of the "King's errand lying in the cadger's gate."

'*February* 23.—Corrected two sheets of Woodstock this morning. These are not the days of idleness. The fact is, that the not seeing company gives me a command of my time which I possessed at no other period in my life, at least since I knew how to make some use of my leisure. There is a great pleasure in sitting down to write with the consciousness that nothing will occur during the day to break the spell. Detained in the Court till past three, and came home just in time to escape a terrible squall. I am a good deal jaded, and will not work till after dinner. There is a sort of drowsy vacillation of mind attends fatigue with me. I can command my pen as the school-copy recommends, but cannot equally command my thoughts, and often write

[1] The late Mr. Williamson of Cardrona, in Peeblesshire, was a strange humorist, of whom Sir Walter told many stories. The allusion here is to the anecdote of the *Leetle Anderson* in the first of Malachi's Epistles.—See Scott's Prose Miscellanies, vol. xxi. p. 289.

one word for another. Read a little volume called The Omen — very well written — deep and powerful language.[1]

'*February* 24.—Went down to printing-office after the Court, and corrected Malachi. J. B. reproaches me with having taken much more pains in this temporary pamphlet than on works which have a greater interest on my fortunes. I have certainly bestowed enough of revision and correction. But the cases are different. In a novel or poem I run the course alone—here I am taking up the cudgels, and may expect a drubbing in return. Besides, I do feel that this is public matter in which the country is deeply interested; and, therefore, is far more important than anything referring to my fame or fortune alone. The pamphlet will soon be out—meantime Malachi prospers and excites much attention. The banks have bespoke 500 copies. The country is taking the alarm; and, I think, the Ministers will not dare to press the measure. I should rejoice to see the old red lion ramp a little, and the thistle again claim its *nemo me impune*. I do believe Scotsmen will show themselves unanimous at last, where their cash is concerned. They shall not want backing. I incline to cry with Biron in Love's Labour's Lost,

More Atés, more Atés, stir them on.

I suppose all imaginative people feel more or less of excitation from a scene of insurrection or tumult, or of general expression of national feeling. When I was a lad, poor Davie Douglas[2] used to accuse me of being *cupidus novarum rerum*, and say that I loved the stimulus of a broil. It might be so then and even still—

Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.[3]

Whimsical enough, that when I was trying to animate

[1] The Omen, by Mr. Galt, had just been published.—See Sir Walter's review of this novel in his Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xviii. p. 333, or in Blackwood's Magazine for July 1826. [John Galt died at Greenock in April 1839.]

[2] Lord Reston.—See *ante*, vol. i. p. 22.

[3] Gray's Elegy.

Scotland against the currency bill, John Gibson brought me the deed of trust, assigning my whole estate, to be subscribed by me; so that I am turning patriot, and taking charge of the affairs of the country, on the very day I proclaim myself incapable of managing my own. What of that? Who would think of their own trumpery debts, when they are taking the support of the whole system of Scottish banking on their shoulders? Odd enough too—on this day, for the first time since the awful 17th January, we entertain a party at dinner—Lady Anna Maria Elliot,[1] W. Clerk, John A. Murray,[2] and Thomas Thomson—as if we gave a dinner on account of my *cessio fori*.

'*February* 25.—Our party yesterday went off very gaily; much laugh and fun, and I think I enjoyed it more from the rarity of the event—I mean from having seen society at home so seldom of late. My head aches slightly though; yet we were but a bottle of champaign, one of port, one of old sherry, and two of claret, among four gentlemen and three ladies. I have been led, from this incident, to think of taking chambers near Clerk, in Rose Court. Methinks the retired situation should suit me well. Then a man and woman would be my whole establishment. My superfluous furniture might serve, and I could ask a friend or two to dinner, as I have been accustomed to do. I shall look at the place to-day. I must set now to a second epistle of Malachi to the Athenians. If I can but get the sulky Scottish spirit set up, the devil won't turn them.

> Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprush;
> We'll over the Border, and give them a brush;
> There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour;
> Hey, Johnnie, lad, cock up your beaver.

'*February* 26.—Spent the morning and till dinner on

[1] Now Lady A. M. Donkin.

[2] Afterwards Lord Advocate, and now a Judge of Session by the title of Lord Murray.—[1839.]

Malachi's second epistle. It is difficult to steer betwixt the natural impulse of one's national feelings setting in one direction, and the prudent regard to the interests of the empire and its internal peace and quiet, recommending less vehement expression. I will endeavour to keep sight of both. But were my own interest alone concerned, d—n me but I would give it them hot! Had some valuable communications from Colin Mackenzie, which will supply my plentiful lack of facts.

'Received an anonymous satire in doggerel, which, having read the first verse and last, I committed to the flames.—Peter Murray of Simprim called, and sat half an hour—an old friend, and who, from the peculiarity and originality of his genius, is one of the most entertaining companions I have ever known. But I must finish Malachi.

'*February* 27.—Malachi is getting on; I must finish him to-night. I daresay some of my London friends will be displeased — Canning perhaps, for he is *engoué* of Huskisson. Can't help it.—The place I looked at won't do; but I must really get some lodging, for, reason or none, Dalgleish will not leave me, and cries and makes a scene.[1] Now, if I stayed alone in a little set of chambers, he would serve greatly for my accommodation. There are some places of the kind in the New Buildings; but they are distant from the Court, and I cannot walk well on the pavement. It is odd enough, that just when I had made a resolution to use my coach frequently, I ceased to keep one.

'*February* 28.—Completed Malachi to-day. It is more serious than the first, and in some places perhaps too peppery. Never mind; if you would have a horse kick, make a crupper out of a whin-cow;[2] and I trust to see Scotland kick and fling to some purpose. Woodstock lies back for this. But *quid non pro patria?*

[1] Dalgleish was Sir Walter's butler. He said he cared not how much his wages were reduced—but go he would not.

[2] *Whin-cow*—Anglicè, a bush of furze.

'*March* 1.—Malachi is in the Edinburgh Journal to-day, and reads like the work of an uncompromising right-forward Scot of the old school. Some of the cautious and pluckless instigators will be afraid of their confederate; for if a man of some energy and openness of character happens to be on the same side with these jobbers, they stand as much in awe of his vehemence as did the inexperienced conjurer who invoked a fiend whom he could not manage. Came home in a heavy shower with the Solicitor. I tried him on the question, but found him reserved. The future Lord Advocate must be cautious; but I can tell my good friend John Hope, that if he acts the part of a firm and resolute Scottish patriot, both his own country and England will respect him the more. Ah! Hal Dundas, there was no truckling in thy day!

'Looked out a quantity of things, to go to Abbotsford; for we are flitting, if you please. It is with a sense of pain that I leave behind a parcel of trumpery prints and little ornaments, once the pride of Lady S——'s heart, but which she sees consigned with indifference to the chance of an auction. Things that have had their day of importance with me I cannot forget, though the merest trifles. But I am glad that she, with bad health, and enough to vex her, has not the same useless mode of associating recollections with this unpleasant business. The best part of it is the necessity of leaving behind, viz. getting rid of, a set of most wretched daubs of landscapes, in great gilded frames, of which I have often been heartily ashamed. The history of them was curious. An amateur artist (a lady) happened to fall into misfortunes, upon which her landscapes, the character of which had been buoyed up far beyond their proper level, sank now beneath it, and it was low enough. One most amiable and accomplished old lady continued to encourage her pencil, and to order pictures after pictures, which she sent in presents to her friends. I suppose I have eight or ten of them, which I could not avoid accepting. There will be plenty of laughing when they come to be sold. It would be a good joke enough to cause it to be circulated that they were performances of my own in early youth,

and looked on and bought up as curiosities.—— Do you know why you have written all this down, Sir W.? You want to put off writing Woodstock, just as easily done as these memoranda, but which it happens your duty and your prudence recommend, and therefore you are loath to begin.

Heigho,
I can't say no;
But this piece of task-work off I can stave, O,
For Malachi's posting into an octavo;
To correct the proof-sheets only this night I have, O,
So Conscience you've gotten as good as you gave, O;
But to-morrow a new day we'll better behave, O,
So I lay down the pen, and your pardon I crave, O.

'*March* 2.—I have a letter from Colin Mackenzie, approving Malachi,—"Cold men may say it is too strong; but from the true men of Scotland you are sure of the warmest gratitude." I never have yet found, nor do I expect it on this occasion, that ill-will dies in debt, or what is called gratitude distresses herself by frequent payments. The one is like a ward-holding, and pays its reddendo in hard blows. The other a blanch-tenure, and is discharged for payment of a red rose, or a peppercorn. He that takes the forlorn hope in an attack, is often deserted by them that should support him, and who generally throw the blame of their own cowardice upon his rashness. We shall see this end in the same way. But I foresaw it from the beginning. The bankers will be persuaded that it is a squib which may burn their own fingers, and will curse the poor pyrotechnist that compounded it—if they do, they be d—d. Slept indifferently, and dreamed of Napoleon's last moments, of which I was reading a medical account last night, by Dr. Arnott. Horrible death—a cancer on the pylorus. I would have given something to have lain still this morning and made up for lost time. But *desidiæ valedixi*. If you once turn on your side after the hour at which you ought to rise, it is all over. Bolt up at once. Bad night last—the next is sure to be better.

When the drum beats, make ready;
When the fife plays, march away—
To the roll-call, to the roll-call, to the roll-call,
Before the break of day.

'Dined with Chief Commissioner: Admiral Adam, W. Clerk, Thomson, and I. The excellent old man was cheerful at intervals—at times sad, as was natural. A good blunder, he told us, occurred in the Annandale case, which was a question partly of domicile. It was proved, that leaving Lochwood, the Earl had given up his *kain* and *carriages;*[1] this an English counsel contended was the best of all possible proofs that the noble Earl designed an absolute change of residence, since he laid aside his *walking-stick* and his *coach.* First epistle of Malachi out of print already.

'*March* 3.—Could not get the last sheets of Malachi, Second Epistle, so they must go out to the world uncorrected—a great loss, for the last touches are always most effectual; and I expect misprints in the additional matter. We were especially obliged to have it out this morning that it may operate as a gentle preparative for the meeting of inhabitants at two o'clock. *Vogue la galère*—we shall see if Scotsmen have any pluck left. If not, they may kill the next Percy themselves. It is ridiculous enough for me, in a state of insolvency for the present, to be battling about gold and paper currency—it is something like the humorous touch in Hogarth's Distressed Poet, where the poor starveling of the Muses is engaged, when in the abyss of poverty, in writing an Essay on Payment of the National Debt; and his wall is adorned with a plan of the mines of Peru. Nevertheless, even these fugitive attempts, from the success which they have had, and the noise they are making, serve to show the truth of the old proverb—

When house and land are gone and spent,
Then learning is most excellent.

[1] *Kain*, in Scotch law, means payment in *kind*—*Carriages*, in the same phraseology, stands for services in driving with horse and cart.

On the whole, I am glad of this bruilzie, as far as I am concerned; people will not dare talk of me as an object of pity—no more 'poor-manning.' Who asks how many punds Scots the old champion had in his pocket when

> He set a bugle to his mouth,
> And blew so loud and shrill,
> The trees in greenwood shook thereat,
> Sae loud rang every hill?[1]

This sounds conceited enough, yet is not far from truth.

'The meeting was very numerous,—five hundred or six hundred at least, and unanimous, saving one Mr. Howden, who having been all his life, as I am told, in bitter opposition to Ministers, proposed on the present occasion that the whole contested measure should be trusted to their wisdom. I suppose he chose the opportunity of placing his own opinion in opposition, single opposition too, to one of a large assembly. The speaking was very moderate. Report had said that Jeffrey, J. A. Murray, and other sages of the economical school, were to unbuckle their mails, and give us their opinions. But no such great guns appeared. If they had, having the multitude on my side, I would have tried to break a lance with them. A few short but well-expressed resolutions were adopted unanimously. These were proposed by Lord Rollo, and seconded by Sir James Fergusson, Bart. I was named one of a committee to encourage all sorts of opposition to the measure. So I have already broken through two good and wise resolutions—one, that I would not write on political controversy; another, that I would not be named in public committees. If my good resolves go this way, like *snaw aff a dyke*—the Lord help me!

'*March* 4.—Last night I had a letter from Lockhart, who, speaking of Malachi, says, "The Ministers are sore beyond imagination at present; and some of them, I hear, have felt this new whip on the raw to some purpose." I conclude he means Canning is offended. I can't help it,

[1] Ballad of Hardyknute, slightly altered.

as I said before—*fiat justitia, ruat cælum.* No cause in which I had the slightest personal interest should have made me use my pen against them, blunt and pointed as it may be. But as they are about to throw this country into distress and danger, by a measure of useless and uncalled-for experiment, they must hear the opinion of the Scotsman, to whom it is of no other consequence than as a general measure affecting the country at large—and more they *shall* hear. I had determined to lay down the pen. But now they shall have another of Malachi, beginning with buffoonery, and ending as seriously as I can write it. It is like a frenzy that they will agitate the upper and middling classes of society, so very friendly to them, with unnecessary and hazardous projects.

Oh, thus it was they loved them dear,
And sought how to requite 'em,
And having no friends left but they,
They did resolve to fight them.

The country is very high just now. England may carry the measure if she will, doubtless. But what will be the consequence of the distress ensuing, God only can foretell. Lockhart, moreover, enquires about my affairs anxiously, and asks what he is to say about them; says "he has enquiries every day; kind, most kind all, and among the most interested and anxious, Sir William Knighton, who told me the King was quite melancholy all the evening he heard of it." *This* I can well believe, for the King, educated as a prince, has nevertheless as true and kind a heart as any subject in his dominions. He goes on—"I do think they would give you a Baron's gown as soon as possible," etc. I have written to him in answer, showing I have enough to carry me on, and can dedicate my literary efforts to clear my land. The preferment would suit me well, and the late Duke of Buccleuch gave me his interest for it. I daresay the young Duke would do the same, for the unvaried love I have borne his house; and by and by he will have a voice potential. But there is Sir William Rae, whose prevailing claim I would never place my own in opposition to, even were it possible, by a *tour de force*,

such as L. points at to set it aside. Meantime, I am building a barrier betwixt me and promotion.

'In the meanwhile, now I am not pulled about for money, etc., methinks I am happier without my wealth than with it. Everything is paid. I have no one anxious to *make up a sum*, and pushing for his account to be paid. Since 17th January, I have not laid out a guinea, out of my own hand, save two or three in charity, and six shillings for a pocket-book. But the cash with which I set out having run short for family expenses, I drew on Blackwood, through Ballantyne, which was honoured, for £25, to account of Malachi's Letters, of which another edition of one thousand is ordered, and gave it to Lady Scott, because our removal will require that in hand. On the 20th my quarter comes in, and though I have something to pay out of it, I shall be on velvet for expense—and regular I will be. Methinks all trifling objects of expenditure seem to grow light in my eyes. That I may regain independence, I must be saving. But ambition awakes, as love of indulgence dies and is mortified within me. "Dark Cuthullin will be renowned or dead." [1]

'*March* 5.—Something of toddy and cigar in that last quotation, I think. Yet I only smoked two, and liquefied with one glass of spirits and water. I have sworn I will not blot out what I have once written here.

'*March* 6.—Finished third Malachi, which I don't much like. It respects the difficulty of finding gold to replace the paper circulation. Now this should have been considered first. The admitting that the measure may be imposed, is yielding up the question, and Malachi is like a commandant who should begin to fire from interior defences before his outworks were carried. If Ballantyne be of my own opinion, I will suppress it. We are all in a bustle shifting things to Abbotsford. It is odd, but I don't feel the impatience for the country which I have usually experienced.

[1] Ossian.

'*March* 7.—Detained in the Court till *three* by a hearing. Then to the committee appointed at the meeting on Friday, to look after the small-note business. A pack of old *fainéants*, incapable of managing such a business, and who will lose the day from mere coldness of heart. There are about a thousand names at the petition. They have added no designations—a great blunder; for *testimonia sunt ponderanda non numeranda* should never be lost sight of. They are disconcerted and helpless; just as in the business of the King's visit, when everybody threw the weight on me. In another time—so disgusted was I with seeing them sitting in ineffectual helplessness, spitting on the hot iron that lay before them, and touching it with a timid finger, as if afraid of being scalded, that I might have dashed in and taken up the hammer, summoned the deacons and other heads of public bodies, and by consulting them have carried them with me. But I cannot waste my time, health, and spirits in fighting thankless battles. I left them in a quarter of an hour, and presage, unless the country make an alarm, the cause is lost. The philosophical reviewers manage their affairs better—hold off—avoid committing themselves, but throw their *vis inertiæ* into the opposite scale, and neutralize feelings which they cannot combat. To force them to fight on disadvantageous ground is our policy. But we have more sneakers after ministerial favour, than men who love their country, and who, upon a liberal scale, would serve their party. For to force the Whigs to avow an unpopular doctrine in popular assemblies, or to wrench the government of such bodies from them, would be a *coup de maître*. But they are alike destitute of manly resolution and sound policy. D—n the whole nest of them! I have corrected the last of Malachi, and let the thing take its chance. I have made just enemies enough, and indisposed enough of friends.

'*March* 8.—At the Court, though a teind day. A foolish thing happened while the Court were engaged with the teinds. I amused myself with writing on a sheet of

paper, notes on Frederick Maitland's account of the capture of Buonaparte; and I have lost these notes—shuffled in perhaps among my own papers, or those of the teind clerks. What a curious document to be found in a process of valuation. Being jaded and sleepy, I took up Le Duc de Guise on Naples. I think this, with the old Memoirs on the same subject which I have at Abbotsford, would enable me to make a pretty essay for the Quarterly. We must take up Woodstock now in good earnest. Mr. Cowan, a good and able man, is chosen trustee in Constable's affairs, with full power. From what I hear, the poor man Constable is not sensible of the nature of his own situation; for myself, I have succeeded in putting the matter perfectly out of my mind since I cannot help it, and have arrived at a flocci-pauci-nihili-pili-fication of misery, and I thank whoever invented that long word. They are removing our wine, etc. to the carts, and you will judge if our flitting is not making a noise in the world, or in the street at least.

'*March* 9.—I foresaw justly,

> When first I set this dangerous stone a-rolling,
> 'Twould fall upon myself.[1]

Sir Robert Dundas to-day put into my hands a letter of between twenty and forty pages, in angry and bitter reprobation of Malachi, full of general averments, and very untenable arguments, all written *at* me by name, but of which I am to have no copy, and which is to be circulated to other special friends, to whom it may be necessary "to give the sign to hate." I got it at two o'clock, and returned it with an answer four hours afterwards, in which I have studied not to be tempted into either sarcastic or harsh expressions. A quarrel it is, however, in all the forms, between my old friend and myself, and his Lordship's reprimand is to be *read out in order* to all our friends. They all know what I have said is true, but that will be nothing to the purpose if they

[1] King Henry VIII. Act V. Scene 3.

are desired to consider it as false. Nobody at least can plague me for interest with Lord Melville as they used to do. By the way, from the tone of his letter, I think his Lordship will give up the measure, and I shall be the peace-offering. All will agree to condemn me as too warm —*too rash*—and yet rejoice in privileges which they would not have been able to save but for a little rousing of spirit, which will not perhaps fall asleep again.—A gentleman called on the part of a Captain Rutherford, to make enquiry about the Lord Rutherfords. Not being very *cleever*, as John Fraser used to say, at these pedigree matters, referred him to my cousin Robert Rutherford. Very odd—when there is a vacant or dormant title in a Scottish family or *name*, everybody, and all connected with the clan, conceive they have *quodam modo* a right to it. Not being engrossed by any individual, it communicates part of its lustre to every individual in the tribe, as if it remained in common stock for that purpose.

'*March* 10.—I am not made entirely on the same mould of passions like other people. Many men would deeply regret a breach with so old a friend as Lord Melville, and many men would be in despair at losing the good graces of a Minister of State for Scotland, and all pretty views about what might be done for myself and my sons, especially Charles. But I think my good Lord doth ill to be angry, like the patriarch of old, and I have, in my odd *sans souciance* character, a good handful of meal from the grist of the Jolly Miller, who

> once
> Dwelled on the river Dee;
> I care for nobody, no not I,
> Since nobody cares for me.

'Sandie Young[1] came in at breakfast-time with a Monsieur Brocque of Montpelier. Saw Sir Robert Dundas at Court. He is to send my letter to Lord Melville.

[1] Alexander Young, Esq. of Harburn—a steady Whig of the old school, and a steady and highly esteemed friend of Sir Walter's.

Colin Mackenzie concurs in thinking Lord M. quite wrong. *He must cool in the skin he het in.*

'On coming home from the Court a good deal fatigued, I took a nap in my easy chair, then packed my books, and committed the refuse to Jock Stevenson—

Left not a limb on which a Dane could triumph.

Gave Mr. Gibson my father's cabinet, which suits a man of business well. Gave Jock Stevenson the picture of my favourite dog Camp, mentioned in one of the introductions to Marmion, and a little crow-quill drawing of Melrose Abbey by Nelson, whom I used to call the Admiral, poor fellow. He had some ingenuity, and was in a moderate way a good penman and draughtsman. He left his situation of amanuensis to go into Lord Home's militia regiment, but his dissipation got the better of a strong constitution, and he fell into bad habits and poverty, and died, I believe, in the Hospital at Liverpool.—Strange enough that Henry Weber, who acted afterwards as my amanuensis for many years, had also a melancholy fate ultimately. He was a man of very superior attainments, an excellent linguist and geographer, and a remarkable antiquary. He published a collection of ancient Romances, superior, I think, to the elaborate Ritson. He also published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, but too carelessly done to be reputable. He was a violent Jacobin, which he thought he disguised from me, while I, who cared not a fig about the poor young man's politics, used to amuse myself with teasing him. He was an excellent and affectionate creature, but unhappily was afflicted with partial insanity, especially if he used strong liquors, to which, like others with that unhappy tendency, he was occasionally addicted. In 1814 he became quite insane, and, at the risk of my life, I had to disarm him of a pair of loaded pistols, which I did by exerting the sort of authority which, I believe, gives an effectual control in such cases.[1] My patronage in this way has not been lucky to the parties protected. I hope poor George Huntly Gordon will escape the influence of the evil star.

[1] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 315.

He has no vice, poor fellow, but his total deafness makes him helpless.

'*March* 11.—This day the Court rose after a long and laborious sederunt. I employed the remainder of the day in completing a set of notes on Captain Maitland's manuscript narrative of the reception of Napoleon Buonaparte on board the Bellerophon. It had been previously in the hands of my friend Basil Hall, who had made many excellent corrections in point of style; but he had been hypercritical in wishing (in so important a matter, where everything depends on accuracy) this expression to be altered, for delicacy's sake—that to be corrected, for fear of giving offence—and that other to be abridged, for fear of being tedious. The plain sailor's narrative for me, written on the spot, and bearing in its minuteness the evidence of its veracity. Lord Elgin sent me, some time since, a curious account of his imprisonment in France, and the attempts which were made to draw him into some intrigue which might authorize treating him with rigour.[1] He called to-day and communicated some curious circumstances, on the authority of Fouché, Denon, and others, respecting Buonaparte and the Empress Maria Louisa, whom Lord Elgin had conversed with on the subject in Italy. His conduct towards her was something like that of Ethwald to Elburga, in Joanna Baillie's fine tragedy, making her postpone her high rank by birth to the authority which he had acquired by his talents.

'*March* 12.—Resumed Woodstock, and wrote my task of six pages. I cannot *gurnalize*, however, having wrought my eyes nearly out.

'*March* 13.—Wrote to the end of a chapter, and knowing no more than the man in the moon what comes next, I will put down a few of Lord Elgin's remembrances, and something may occur to me in the meanwhile. . . .

[1] See Life of Buonaparte—Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xi. pp. 346-351.

'I have hinted in these notes, that I am not entirely free from a sort of gloomy fits, with a fluttering of the heart and depression of spirits, just as if I knew not what was going to befall me. I can sometimes resist this successfully, but it is better to evade than combat it. The hang-dog spirit may have originated in the confusion and chucking about of our old furniture, the stripping of walls of pictures, and rooms of ornaments; the leaving of a house we have so long called our home, is altogether melancholy enough. I am glad Lady S. does not mind it, and yet I wonder, too. She insists on my remaining till Wednesday, not knowing what I suffer. Meanwhile, to make my recusant spirit do penance, I have set to work to clear away papers and pack them for my journey. What a strange medley of thoughts such a task produces! There lie letters which made the heart throb when received, now lifeless and uninteresting—as are perhaps their writers—riddles which have been read—schemes which time has destroyed or brought to maturity—memorials of friendships and enmities which are now alike faded. Thus does the ring of Saturn consume itself. To-day annihilates yesterday, as the old tyrant swallowed his children, and the snake its tail. But I must say to my Journal as poor Byron did to Moore—"D—n it, Tom, don't be poetical."

'*March* 14.—J. B. called this morning to take leave, and receive directions about proofs, etc. Talks of the uproar about Malachi; but I am tired of Malachi—the humour is off, and I have said what I wanted to say, and put the people of Scotland on their guard, as well as Ministers, if they like to be warned. They are gradually destroying what remains of nationality, and making the country *tabula rasa* for doctrines of bold innovation. Their loosening and grinding down all those peculiarities which distinguished us as Scotsmen, will throw the country into a state in which it will be universally turned to democracy, and instead of canny Saunders, they will have a very dangerous North-British neighbourhood. Some lawyer

expressed to Lord Elibank an opinion, that at the Union the English law should have been extended all over Scotland. "I cannot say how that might have answered our purpose," said Lord Patrick, who was never nonsuited for want of an answer, "but it would scarce have suited *yours*, since by this time the *Aberdeen Advocates*[1] would have possessed themselves of all the business in Westminster Hall."

'What a detestable feeling this fluttering of the heart is! I know it is nothing organic, and that it is entirely nervous; but the sickening effects of it are dispiriting to a degree. Is it the body brings it on the mind, or the mind that inflicts upon the body? I cannot tell; but it is a severe price to pay for the *Fata Morgana* with which Fancy sometimes amuses men of warm imaginations. As to body and mind, I fancy I might as well enquire whether the fiddle or fiddlestick makes the tune. In youth this complaint used to throw me into involuntary passions of causeless tears. But I will drive it away in the country by exercise. I wish I had been a mechanic: a turning-lathe or a chest of tools would have been a God-send; for thought makes the access of melancholy rather worse than better. I have it seldom, thank God, and, I believe lightly, in comparison of others.

'It was the fiddle, after all, was out of order—not the fiddlestick; the body, not the mind. I walked out; met Mrs. Skene, who took a round with me in Prince's Street. Bade Constable and Cadell farewell, and had a brisk walk home, which enables me to face the desolation here with more spirit. News from Sophia. She has had the luck to get an anti-druggist in a Dr. Gooch, who prescribes care for Johnnie instead of drugs, and a little home-brewed ale instead of wine; and, like a liberal physician, supplies the medicine he prescribes. As for myself, since I had scarce stirred to take exercise for four or five days, no wonder I had the mulligrubs. It is an awful sensation,

[1] The *Attorneys* of the town of Aberdeen are styled *Advocates*. This valuable privilege is said to have been bestowed at an early period by some (sportive) monarch.

though, and would have made an enthusiast of me, had I indulged my imagination on devotional subjects. I have been always careful to place my mind in the most tranquil posture which it can assume during my private exercises of devotion.

'I have amused myself occasionally very pleasantly during the last few days by reading over Lady Morgan's novel of O'Donnel, which has some striking and beautiful passages of situation and description, and in the comic part is very rich and entertaining. I do not remember being so much pleased with it at first. There is a want of story, always fatal to a book the first reading—and it is well if it gets a chance of a second. Alas, poor novel! Also read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of Pride and Prejudice. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!

'*March* 15.—This morning I leave No. 39 Castle Street for the last time. "The cabin was convenient," and habit had made it agreeable to me. I never reckoned upon a change in this particular so long as I held an office in the Court of Session. In all my former changes of residence it was from good to better; this is retrograding. I leave this house for sale, and I cease to be an Edinburgh citizen, in the sense of being a proprietor, which my father and I have been for sixty years at least. So farewell, poor 39, and may you never harbour worse people than those who now leave you. Not to desert the Lares all at once, Lady S. and Anne remain till Sunday. As for me, I go, as aforesaid, this morning.

Ha til mi tulidh!—'[1]

[1] I return no more.

CHAPTER LXIX

Domestic afflictions—Correspondence with Sir Robert Dundas and Mr. Croker on the subject of Malachi Malagrowther.

1826

Sir Walter's Diary begins to be clouded with a darker species of distress than mere loss of wealth could bring to his spirit. His darling grandson is sinking apace at Brighton. The misfortunes against which his manhood struggled with stern energy were encountered by his affectionate wife under the disadvantages of enfeebled health; and it seems but too evident that mental pain and mortification had a great share in hurrying her ailments to a fatal end.

Nevertheless, all his afflictions do not seem to have interrupted for more than a day or two his usual course of labour. With rare exceptions he appears, all through this trying period, to have finished his daily task—thirty printed pages of Woodstock, until that novel was completed; or, if he paused in it, he gave a similar space of time to some minor production; such as his paper on Galt's Omen for Blackwood's Magazine — or his very valuable one on the Life of Kemble for the Quarterly Review. And hardly had Woodstock been finished before he began the Chronicles of the Canongate. He also corresponded much as usual (notwithstanding all he says about indolence on that score) with his absent friends; and I need scarcely add, that his duties as Sheriff claimed many hours every week. The picture of resolution and industry which this portion of his Journal presents, is

certainly as remarkable as the boldest imagination could have conceived.

Before I open the Diary again, however, I may as well place in what an ingenious contemporary novelist calls an 'Inter-Chapter,' three letters connected with the affair of Malachi Malagrowther. The first was addressed to the late Sir Robert Dundas (his colleague at the Clerk's Table), on receiving through him the assurance that Lord Melville, however strong in his dissent from Malachi's views on the Currency Question, had not allowed that matter to interrupt his affectionate regard for the author. The others will speak for themselves.

'*To Sir Robert Dundas of Dunira, Bart., Heriot Row, Edinburgh.*

'MY DEAR SIR ROBERT—I had your letter to-day, and am much interested and affected by its contents. Whatever Lord Melville's sentiments had been towards me, I could never have lost remembrance of the very early friend with whom I carried my satchel to school, and whose regard I had always considered as one of the happiest circumstances of my life. I remain of the same opinion respecting the Letters, which have occasioned so much more notice than they would have deserved, had there not been a very general feeling in this country, and among Lord Melville's best friends too, authorizing some public remonstrances of the kind from some one like myself, who had nothing to win or to lose—or rather, who hazarded losing a great deal in the good opinion of friends whom he was accustomed not to value only, but to reverence. As to my friend Croker, an adventurer like myself, I would throw my hat into the ring for love, and give him a bellyful. But I do not feel there is any call on me to do so, as I could not do it without entering into particulars, which I have avoided. If I had said, which I might have done, that, in a recent case, a gentleman holding an office under the Great Seal of Scotland, was referred to the English Crown Counsel—who gave

their opinion—on which opinion the Secretary was prepared to act—that he was forcibly to be pushed from his situation, because he was, from age and malady, not adequate to its duties,—and that by a process of English law, the very name of which was unknown to us,—I would, I think, have made a strong case. But I care not to enter into statements to the public, the indirect consequence of which might be painful to some of our friends. I only venture to hope on that subject, that, suffering Malachi to go as a misrepresenter, or calumniator, or what they will, some attention may be paid that such grounds for calumny and misrepresentation shall not exist in future—I am contented to be the scape-goat. I remember the late Lord Melville defending, in a manner that defied refutation, the Scots laws against sedition, and I have lived to see these repealed, by what our friend Baron Hume calls "a bill for the better encouragement of sedition and treason." It will last my day probably; at least I shall be too old to be shot, and have only the honourable chance of being hanged for *incivisme*. The whole burgher class of Scotland are gradually preparing for radical reform — I mean the middling and respectable classes; and when a burgh reform comes, which perhaps cannot long be delayed, Ministers will not return a member for Scotland from the towns. The gentry will abide longer by sound principles; for they are needy, and desire advancement for their sons, and appointments, and so on. But this is a very hollow dependence, and those who sincerely hold ancient opinions are waxing old.

'Differing so much as we do on this head, and holding my own opinion as I would do a point of religious faith, I am sure I ought to feel the more indebted to Lord Melville's kindness and generosity for suffering our difference to be no breach in our ancient friendship. I shall always feel his sentiments in this respect as the deepest obligation I owe him; for, perhaps, there are some passages in Malachi's epistles that I ought to have moderated. But I desired to make a strong impression, and speak out, not on the Currency Question alone, but on the treatment

of Scotland generally, the opinion which, I venture to say, has been long entertained by Lord Melville's best friends, though who that had anything to hope or fear would have hesitated to state it? So much for my Scottish feelings—prejudices, if you will; but which were born, and will die with me. For those I entertain towards Lord Melville personally, I can only say that I have lost much in my life; but the esteem of an old friend is that I should regret the most; and I repeat I feel most sensibly the generosity and kindness so much belonging to his nature, which can forgive that which has probably been most offensive to him. People may say I have been rash and inconsiderate; they cannot say I have been either selfish or malevolent—I have shunned all the sort of popularity attending the discussion; nay, have refused to distribute the obnoxious letters in a popular form, though urged from various quarters.

'Adieu! God bless you, my dear Sir Robert. You may send the whole or any part of this letter if you think proper; I should not wish him to think that I was sulky about the continuance of his friendship.—I am yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT.'

'*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*

[*Private and confidential.*]

'ADMIRALTY, *March* 16, 1826.

'MY DEAR SCOTT—I have seen Lord Melville's and your letters to Sir R. Dundas, and the tone of both of them makes me feel very anxious to say a confidential word or two to you on the subject. I am not going to meddle with the politics, which are bad enough in printed letters, but to endeavour, in the cordiality of a sincere private friendship, to satisfy you that these differences on speculative points of public policy do not, in this region, and ought not in yours, to cause any diminution of private intercourse and regard. Lord Melville certainly felt that *his* administration of Scottish affairs was sweepingly

attacked, and the rest of the Government were astonished to see the one-pound note question made a kind of war-cry which might excite serious practical consequences; and, no doubt, these feelings were expressed pretty strongly, but it was in the spirit of *et tu, Brute!* The regard, the admiration, the love, which we all bear towards you, made the stroke so much more painful to those who thought it directed at them; but that feeling was local and temporary: by local, I mean that the pain was felt on the spot where the blow was given—and I hope and believe it was so temporary as to be already forgotten. I can venture to assure you that it did not at all interfere with the deep sympathy with which we all heard of the losses you had sustained, nor would it, I firmly believe, have caused a moment's hesitation in doing anything which might be useful or agreeable to you, if such an opportunity had occurred. However Lord Melville may have expressed his soreness on what, it must be admitted, was an attack on *him*, as being for the last twenty years the Minister for Scotland, there is not a man in the world who would be more glad to have an opportunity of giving you any mark of his regard; and from the moment we heard of the inconvenience you suffered, even down to this hour, I do not believe he has had another feeling towards you privately, than that which you might have expected from his general good-nature and his particular friendship for you.

'As to *myself* (if I may venture to name myself to you), I am so ignorant of Scottish affairs, and so remote from Scottish interest, that you will easily believe that I felt no *personal* discomposure from Mr. Malagrowther. What little I know of Scotland *you* have taught me, and my chief feeling on this subject was *wonder* that so clever a fellow as M. M. could entertain opinions so different from those which I fancied that I had learnt from you. But this has nothing to do with our *private feelings*. If I differed from M. M. as widely as I do from Mr. M'Culloch, that need not affect my *private feelings* towards Sir Walter Scott, nor his towards me. He may

feel the matter very warmly as a Scotchman; I can only have a very general, and therefore proportionably faint interest in the subject; but in either case you and I are not, like Sir Archy and Sir Callaghan, to quarrel about Sir Archy's great-grandmother; but I find that I am dwelling too long on so insignificant a part of the subject as myself. I took up my pen with the intention of satisfying you as to the feelings of more important persons, and I shall now quit the topic altogether, with a single remark, that this letter is strictly confidential, that even Lord Melville knows nothing of it, and *à plus forte raison*, nobody else.—Believe me to be, my dear Scott, most sincerely and affectionately yours, J. W. CROKER.'

'*To J. W. Croker, Esq., M.P., etc. etc., Admiralty.*

'ABBOTSFORD, 19*th March* 1826.

'MY DEAR CROKER—I received your very kind letter with the feelings it was calculated to excite — those of great affection mixed with pain, which, indeed, I had already felt and anticipated before taking the step which I knew you must all feel as awkward, coming from one who has been honoured with so much personal regard. I need not, I am sure, say, that I acted from nothing but an honest desire of serving this country. Depend upon it, that if a succession of violent and experimental changes are made from session to session, with bills to amend bills, where no want of legislation had been at all felt, Scotland will, within ten or twenty years, perhaps much sooner, read a more fearful commentary on poor Malachi's Epistles than any statesman residing out of the country, and stranger to the habits and feelings which are entertained here, can possibly anticipate. My head may be low — I hope it will — before the time comes. But Scotland, completely liberalised, as she is in a fair way of being, will be the most dangerous neighbour to England that she has had since 1639. There is yet time to make a stand, for there is yet a great deal of good and genuine

feeling left in the country. But if you *unscotch* us, you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen. The restless and yet laborious and constantly watchful character of the people, their desire for speculation in politics or anything else, only restrained by some proud feelings about their own country, now become antiquated, and which late measures will tend much to destroy, will make them, under a wrong direction, the most formidable revolutionists who ever took the field of innovation. The late Lord Melville knew them well, and managed them accordingly. Our friend, the present Lord Melville, with the same sagacity, has not the same advantages. His high office has kept him much in the south;—and when he comes down here, it is to mingle with persons who have almost all something to hope or ask for at his hands.

'But I shall say no more on this subject so far as politics are concerned, only you will remember the story of the shield, which was on one side gold, and on the other silver, and which two knights fought about till they were mutually mortally wounded, each avowing the metal to be that which he himself witnessed. You see the shield on the golden, I, God knows, not on the silver side—but in a black, gloomy, and most ominous aspect.

'With respect to your own share in the controversy, it promised me so great an honour that I laboured under a strong temptation to throw my hat into the ring, tie my colours to the ropes, cry, *Hollo there, Saint Andrew for Scotland!* and try what a good cause might do for a bad, at least an inferior, combatant. But then I must have brought forward my facts; and, as these must have compromised friends individually concerned, I felt myself obliged, with regret for forfeiting some honour, rather to abstain from the contest. Besides, my dear Croker, I must say, that you sported too many and too direct personal allusions to myself, not to authorise and even demand some retaliation *dans le même genre;* and however good-humouredly men begin this sort of "sharp

encounter of their wits," their temper gets the better of them at last. When I was a cudgel-player, a sport at which I was once an ugly customer, we used to bar rapping over the knuckles, because it always ended in breaking heads; the matter may be remedied by baskets in a set-to with oak saplings, but I know no such defence in the rapier and poniard game of wit. So I thought it best not to endanger the loss of an old friend for a bad jest, and sit quietly down with your odd hits, and the discredit which I must count on here for not repaying them, or trying to do so.

'As for my affairs, which you allude to so kindly, I can safely say, that no oak ever quitted its withered leaves more easily than I have done what might be considered as great wealth. I wish to God it were as easy for me to endure impending misfortunes of a very different kind. You may have heard that Lockhart's only child is very ill, and the delicate habits of the unfortunate boy have ended in a disease of the spine, which is a hopeless calamity, and in my daughter's present situation, may have consequences on her health terrible for me to anticipate. To add to this, though it needs no addition—for the poor child's voice is day and night in my ear—I have, from a consultation of physicians, a most melancholy account of my wife's health, the faithful companion of rough and smooth, weal and woe, for so many years. So if you compare me to Brutus in the harsher points of his character, you must also allow me some of his stoical fortitude—"no man bears sorrow better."[1]

'I cannot give you a more absolute assurance of the uninterrupted regard with which I must always think of you, and the confidence I repose in your expressions of cordiality, than by entering on details, which one reluctantly mentions, except to those who are sure to participate in them.

'As for Malachi, I am like poor Jean Gordon, the prototype of Meg Merrilies, who was ducked to death at Carlisle for being a Jacobite, and till she was smothered

[1] Julius Cæsar, Act IV. Scene 3.

outright, cried out every time she got her head above water, *Charlie yet.* But I have said my say, and have no wish to give my friends a grain more offence than is consistent with the discharge of my own feelings, which, I think, would have choked me if I had not got my breath out. I had better, perhaps, have saved it to cool my porridge; I have only the prospect of being a sort of Highland Cassandra. But even Cassandra tired of her predictions, I suppose, when she had cried herself hoarse, and disturbed all her friends by howling in their ears what they were not willing to listen to.

'And so God bless you—and believe, though circumstances have greatly diminished the chance of our meeting, I have the same warm sense of your kindness as its uniform tendency has well deserved.—Yours affectionately,

'WALTER SCOTT.'

CHAPTER LXX

Diary resumed—Abbotsford in solitude—Death of Sir A. Don—Review of the Life of Kemble, etc.—Conclusion of Woodstock—Death of Lady Scott—Chronicles of the Canongate begun—Letter to Miss Edgeworth.

APRIL—MAY 1826

DIARY

'*ABBOTSFORD, March* 15—9 *at night.*—The naturally unpleasant feelings which influenced me in my ejectment, for such it is virtually, readily evaporated in the course of the journey, though I had no pleasanter companions than Mrs. Mackay the housekeeper and one of the maids; and I have a shyness of disposition, which looks like pride, but is not, which makes me awkward in speaking to my household domestics. With an out-of-doors' labourer or an old woman gathering sticks I can crack for ever. I was welcomed here on my arrival by the tumult great of men and dogs, all happy to see me. One of my old labourers killed by the fall of a stone working at Gattonside Bridge. Old Will Straiton, my man of wisdom and proverbs, also dead. He was entertaining from his importance and self-conceit, but really a sensible old man. When he heard of my misfortunes, he went to bed, and said he would not rise again, and kept his word. He was very infirm when I last saw him. Tom Purdie in great glory, being released from all farm duty, and destined to attend the woods and be my special assistant.

'*March* 17.—Sent off a packet to J. B.; only three

pages copy—so must work hard for a day or two. I wish I could wind up my bottom handsomely (an odd but accredited phrase); the conclusion will not be luminous; we must try to make it dashing. Have a good deal to do between hands in sorting up—hourly arrival of books. I need not have exulted so soon in having attained ease and quiet. I am robbed of both with a vengeance. A letter from Lockhart. My worst augury is verified; the medical people think poor Johnnie is losing strength; he is gone with his mother to Brighton. The bitterness of this probably impending calamity is extreme. The child was almost too good for this world; beautiful in features; and though spoiled by every one, having one of the sweetest tempers as well as the quickest intellect I ever saw; a sense of humour quite extraordinary in a child, and, owing to the general notice which was taken of him, a great deal more information than suited his hours. He was born in the eighth month, and such children are never strong—seldom long-lived. I look on this side and that, and see nothing but protracted misery—a crippled frame, and decayed constitution, occupying the attention of his parents for years, and dying at the end of that period, when their hearts were turned on him; or the poor child may die before Sophia's confinement, and that may again be a dangerous and bad affair; or she may, by increase of attention to him, injure her own health. In short, to trace into how many branches such a misery may flow, is impossible. The poor dear love had so often a slow fever, that when it pressed its little lips to mine, I always foreboded to my own heart, what all I fear are now aware of.

'*March* 18.—Slept indifferently, and under the influence of Queen Mab, seldom auspicious to me. Dreamed of reading the tale of the Prince of the Black Marble Islands to little Johnnie, extended on a paralytic chair, and yet telling all his pretty stories about Ha-Papa, as he calls me, and Chiefswood—and waked to think I should see the little darling no more, or see him as a thing that had better never have existed. Oh, misery, misery, that the best I

can wish for him is early death, with all the wretchedness to his parents that is likely to ensue! I had intended to have stayed at home to-day; but Tom more wisely had resolved that I should walk, and hung about the window with his axe and my own in his hand till I turned out with him, and helped to cut some fine paling.

'*March* 19.—Lady S., the faithful and true companion of my fortunes, good and bad, for so many years, has, but with difficulty, been prevailed on to see Dr. Abercrombie, and his opinion is far from favourable. Her asthmatic complaints are fast terminating in hydropsy, as I have long suspected; yet the announcement of the truth is overwhelming. They are to stay a little longer in town to try the effects of a new medicine. On Wednesday they propose to return hither—a new affliction, where there was enough before; yet her constitution is so good, that if she will be guided by advice, things may be yet ameliorated. God grant it! for really these misfortunes come too close upon each other.

'*March* 20.—Despatched proofs and copy this morning; and Swanston the carpenter coming in, I made a sort of busy idle day of it with altering and hanging pictures and prints, to find room for those which came from Edinburgh, and by dint of being on foot from ten to near five, put all things into apple-pie order. What strange beings we are! The serious duties I have on hand cannot divert my mind from the most melancholy thoughts; and yet the talking of these workmen, and the trifling occupation which they give me, serves to dissipate my attention. The truth is, I fancy that a body under the impulse of violent motion cannot be stopped or forced back, but may indirectly be urged into a different channel. In the evening I read and sent off my sheriff-court processes.

'*March* 21.—Perused an attack upon myself, done with as much ability as truth, by no less a man than Joseph Hume, the night-work man of the House of Commons, who lives upon petty abuses, and is a very

useful man by so doing. He has had the kindness to say that I am interested in keeping up the taxes; I wish I had anything else to do with them than to pay them. But he is an ass, and not worth a man's thinking about. Joseph Hume, indeed!—I say Joseph Hum,—and could add a Swiftian rhyme, but forbear. Busy in unpacking and repacking. I wrote five pages of Woodstock, which work begins

To appropinque an end.[1]

'*March* 23.—Lady Scott arrived yesterday to dinner. She was better than I expected, but Anne, poor soul, looked very poorly, and had been much worried with the fatigue and discomfort of the last week. Lady S. takes the *digitalis*, and, as she thinks, with advantage, though the medicine makes her very sick. Yet on the whole, things are better than my gloomy apprehensions had anticipated. Took a brushing walk, but not till I had done a good task.

'*March* 24.—Sent off copy, proofs, etc., to J. B.; clamorous for a motto. It is foolish to encourage people to expect such decoraments. It is like being in the habit of showing feats of strength, which you gain little praise by accomplishing, while some shame occurs in failure.

'*March* 26.—Here is a disagreeable morning; snowing and hailing, with gleams of bright sunshine between, and all the ground white, and all the air frozen. I don't like this jumbling of weather. It is ungenial, and gives chilblains. Besides, with its whiteness, and its coldness, and its discomfort, it resembles that most disagreeable of things, a vain, cold, empty, beautiful woman, who has neither mind nor heart, but only features like a doll. I do not know what is so like this disagreeable day, when the sun is so bright, and yet so uninfluential, that

One may gaze upon its beams,
Till he is starved with cold.

[1] Hudibras.

No matter, it will serve as well as another day to finish Woodstock. Walked right to the lake, and coquetted with this disagreeable weather, whereby I catch chilblains in my fingers, and cold in my head. Fed the swans. Finished Woodstock, however, *cum tota sequela* of title-page, introduction, etc., and so, as Dame Fortune says in Quevedo,

'Fly wheel, and the devil drive thee.[1]

'*March* 27.—Another bright cold day. I answered two modest requests from widow ladies. One, whom I had already assisted in some law business, on the footing of her having visited my mother, requested me to write to Mr. Peel, saying, on her authority, that her second son, a youth of infinite merit and accomplishment, was fit for any situation in a public office, and that I requested he might be provided accordingly. Another widowed dame, whose claim is having read Marmion and the Lady of the Lake, besides a promise to read all my other works —Gad, it is a rash engagement!—demands that I shall either pay £200 to get her cub into some place or other, or settle him in a seminary of education. Really this is very much after the fashion of the husbandman of Miguel Turra's requests of Sancho when Governor. "Have you anything else to ask, honest man?" quoth Sancho. But what are the demands of an honest man to those of an honest woman, and she a widow to boot? I do believe your destitute widow, especially if she hath a charge of children, and one or two fit for patronage, is one of the most impudent animals living. Went to Galashiels, and settled the dispute about Sandie's Wall.

'*March* 28.—We have now been in solitude for some time—myself nearly totally so, excepting at meals. One is tempted to ask himself, knocking at the door of his own heart, Do you love this extreme loneliness? I can

[1] *Fortune in her Wits, and the Hour of all Men.*—QUEVEDO'S WORKS, Edinburgh, 1798, vol. iii. p. 107.

answer conscientiously, *I do.* The love of solitude was with me a passion of early youth; when in my teens, I used to fly from company to indulge in visions and airy castles of my own, the disposal of ideal wealth, and the exercise of imaginary power. This feeling prevailed even till I was eighteen, when love and ambition awakening with other passions, threw me more into society, from which I have, however, at times withdrawn myself, and have been always even glad to do so. I have risen from a feast satiated; and unless it be one or two persons of very strong intellect, or whose spirits and good-humour amuse me, I wish neither to see the high, the low, nor the middling class of society. This is a feeling without the least tinge of misanthropy, which I always consider as a kind of blasphemy of a shocking description. If God bears with the very worst of us, we may surely endure each other. If thrown into society, I always have, and always will endeavour to bring pleasure with me, at least to show willingness to please. But for all this, "I had rather live alone," and I wish my appointment, so convenient otherwise, did not require my going to Edinburgh. But this must be, and in my little lodging I shall be lonely enough. Reading at intervals a novel called Granby, one of the class that aspire to describe the actual current of society, whose colours are so evanescent that it is difficult to fix them on the canvas. It is well written, but over-laboured—too much attempt to put the reader exactly up to the thoughts and sentiments of the parties. The women do this better: Edgeworth, Ferrier, Austen, have all given portraits of real society, far superior to anything man, vain man, has produced of the like nature.

'*March* 29.—Worked in the morning. Walked from one till half-past four. A fine flashy disagreeable day—snow-clouds sweeping past among sunshine, driving down the valley, and whitening the country behind them. Mr. Gibson came suddenly in after dinner. Brought very indifferent news from Constable's house. It is not now

hoped that they will pay above three or four shillings in the pound. Robinson supposed not to be much better. Mr. G. goes to London immediately, to sell Woodstock.—This work may fail, perhaps, though better than some of its predecessors. If so, we must try some new manner. I think I could catch the dogs yet. A beautiful and perfect lunar rainbow to-night.

'*April* 1.—*Ex uno die disce omnes.*—Rose at seven or sooner, studied and wrote till breakfast with Anne, about a quarter before ten. Lady Scott seldom able to rise till twelve or one. Then I write or study again till one. At that hour to-day I drove to Huntly-Burn, and walked home by one of the hundred and one pleasing paths which I have made through the woods I have planted—now chatting with Tom Purdie, who carries my plaid, and speaks when he pleases, telling long stories of hits and misses in shooting twenty years back—sometimes chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy—and sometimes attending to the humours of two curious little terriers of the Dandie Dinmont breed, together with a noble wolf-hound puppy which Glengarry has given me to replace Maida. This brings me down to the very moment I do tell—the rest is prophetic. I shall feel drowsy when this book is locked, and perhaps sleep until Dalgleish brings the dinner summons. Then I shall have a chat with Lady S. and Anne; some broth or soup, a slice of plain meat—and man's chief business, in Dr. Johnson's estimation, is briefly despatched. Half an hour with my family, and half an hour's coquetting with a cigar, a tumbler of weak whisky and water, and a novel perhaps, lead on to tea, which sometimes consumes another half-hour of chat; then write and read in my own room till ten o'clock at night; a little bread, and then a glass of porter, and to bed;—and this, very rarely varied by a visit from some one, is the tenor of my daily life—and a very pleasant one indeed, were it not for apprehensions about Lady S. and poor Johnnie Hugh. The former will, I think, do well; for the latter—I fear—I fear——

'*April* 2.—I am in a wayward humour this morning. I received yesterday the last proof-sheets of Woodstock, and I ought to correct them. Now, this *ought* sounds as like as possible to *must*, and *must* I cannot abide. I would go to Prester John's country of free good-will, sooner than I would *must* it to Edinburgh. Yet this is all folly, and silly folly too; and so *must* shall be for once obeyed *after* I have thus written myself out of my aversion to its peremptory sound.—Corrected the said proofs till twelve o'clock—when I think I will treat resolution, not to a dram, as the fellow said after he had passed the gin-shop, but to a walk, the rather that my eyesight is somewhat uncertain and wavering.

'*April* 3.—I have the extraordinary and gratifying news that Woodstock is sold for £8228; all ready money—a matchless sale for less than three months' work.[1] If Napoleon does as well, or near it, it will put the trust affairs in high flourish. Four or five years of leisure and industry would, with such success, amply replace my losses. I have a curious fancy; I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not. I have a little tooth-ache keeps me from working much to-day, besides I sent off, per Blucher, copy for Napoleon, as well as the d—d proofs.—A blank forenoon! But how could I help it, Madam Duty? I was not lazy; on my soul I was not. I did not cry for half holiday for the sale of Woodstock. But in came Colonel Fergusson with Mrs. Stewart of Blackhill, or hall, or something, and I must show her the garden, pictures, etc. This lasts till one; and just as they are at their lunch, and about to go off, guard is relieved by the Laird and Lady Harden, and Miss Eliza Scott—and my dear Chief, whom I love very much, proving a little obsidional or so, remains till three. That same crown, composed of the grass which grew on

[1] The reader will understand that, the Novel being sold for the behoof of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors, this sum includes the cost of printing the first edition, as well as paper.

the walls of besieged places, should be offered to visitors who stay above an hour in any eident[1] person's house. Wrote letters this evening.

'*April* 4.—Wrote two pages in the morning. Then went to Ashestiel with Colonel Fergusson. Found my cousin Russell settled kindly to his gardening, etc. He seems to have brought home with him the enviable talent of being interested and happy in his own place. Ashestiel looks waste, I think, at this time of the year, but is a beautiful place in summer, where I passed some happy years. Did I ever pass unhappy years anywhere? None that I remember, save those at the High School, which I thoroughly detested on account of the confinement. I disliked serving in my father's office, too, from the same hatred to restraint. In other respects, I have had unhappy days, unhappy weeks—even, on one or two occasions, unhappy months; but Fortune's finger has never been able to play a dirge on me for a quarter of a year together. I am sorry to see the Peel-wood and other natural coppice decaying and abridged about Ashestiel—

> The horrid plough has razed the green,
> Where once my children play'd;
> The axe has fell'd the hawthorn screen,
> The schoolboy's summer shade.[2]

'There was a very romantic pasturage, called the Cow-park, which I was particularly attached to, from its wild and sequestered character. Having been part of an old wood which had been cut down, it was full of copse—hazel, and oak, and all sorts of young trees, irregularly scattered over fine pasturage, and affording a hundred intricacies so delicious to the eye and the imagination. But some misjudging friend had cut down and cleared away without mercy, and divided the varied and sylvan scene (which *was* divided by a little rivulet) into the two most formal things in the world—a *thriving*

[1] *Eident*, i.e. eagerly diligent.
[2] These lines are slightly altered from Logan.

plantation, many-angled, as usual—and a park *laid down in grass;* wanting, therefore, the rich graminivorous variety which Nature gives her carpet, and showing instead a braird of six days' growth—lean and hungry growth too —of rye-grass and clover. As for the rill, it stagnates in a deep square ditch, which silences its prattle, and restrains its meanders with a witness. The original scene was, of course, imprinted still deeper on Russell's mind than mine, and I was glad to see he was intensely sorry for the change.

'*April* 5.—Rose late in the morning to give the cold and toothache time to make themselves scarce, which they have obligingly done. Yesterday every tooth on the right side of my head was absolutely waltzing. I would have drawn by the half-dozen, but country dentists are not to be lippened[1] to. To-day all is quietness, but a little stiffness and swelling in the jaw. Worked a fair task; dined, and read Clapperton's journey and Denham's into Bornou. Very entertaining, and less botheration about mineralogy, botany, and so forth, than usual. Pity Africa picks off so many brave men, however. Work again in the evening.

'*April* 6.—Wrote in the morning. Went at one to Huntly-Burn, where I had the great pleasure to hear, through a letter from Sir Adam, that Sophia was in health, and Johnnie gaining strength. It is a fine exchange from deep and aching uncertainty on so interesting a subject, to the little spitfire feeling of "well, but they might have taken the trouble to write." But so wretched a correspondent as myself has not much to say, so I will but grumble sufficiently to maintain the patriarchal dignity. I returned in time to work, and to have a shoal of things from J. B. Among others, a letter from an Irish lady, who, for the *beaux yeux* which I shall never look upon, desires I may forthwith send her all the Waverley Novels, which she assures me will be an *era* in her life. She may find out some other epocha.

[1] *Lippened*—i.e. relied upon.

'*April* 7.—Made out my morning's task—at one drove to Chiefswood, and walked home by the Rhymer's Glen, Mar's Lee, and Haxell-Cleugh. Took me three hours. The heath gets somewhat heavier for me every year—but never mind, I like it altogether as well as the day I could tread it best. The plantations are getting all into green leaf, especially the larches, if theirs may be called leaves, which are only a sort of hair. As I returned, there was, in the phraseology of that most precise of prigs in a white collarless coat and chapeau bras, Mister Commissary * * * * , "a rather dense inspissation of rain." Deil care.

> Lord, who would live turmoiled in the Court,
> And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?[1]

Yet misfortune comes our way too. Poor Laidlaw lost a fine prattling child of five years old yesterday. It is odd enough—John, the Kentish Esquire, has just made the ejaculation which I adopted in the last page, when he kills Cade, and posts away up to Court to get the price set upon his head.—Here is a letter come from Lockhart, full of Court news, and all sorts of news. He erroneously supposes that I think of applying to Ministers about Charles. I would not make such an application for millions; I think if I were to ask patronage it would not be through them, for some time at least, and I might have better access.[2]

'*April* 8.—We expect a *raid* of folks to visit us this morning, whom we must have *dined* before our misfortunes. Save time, wine, and money, these misfortunes—and so far are convenient things. Besides, there is a dignity about them when they come only like the gout in its mildest shape, to authorize diet and retirement, the night-gown and the velvet shoe; when the one comes to chalk-stones, and you go to prison through the other, it is the devil.

[1] 2nd King Henry VI. Act IV. Scene 10.

[2] In a letter of the same day he says—'My interest, as you might have known, lies Windsor-way.'

Or compare the effects of Sieur Gout and absolute poverty upon the stomach—the necessity of a bottle of laudanum in the one case, the want of a morsel of meat in the other. Laidlaw's infant which died on Wednesday is buried to-day. The people coming to visit prevent my going, and I am glad of it. I hate funerals—always did. There is such a mixture of mummery with real grief—the actual mourner perhaps heart-broken, and all the rest making solemn faces, and whispering observations on the weather and public news, and here and there a greedy fellow enjoying the cake and wine. To me it is a farce of most tragical mirth, and I am not sorry (like Provost Coulter [1]), but glad that I shall not see my own. This is a most unfilial tendency of mine, for my father absolutely loved a funeral; and as he was a man of a fine presence, and looked the mourner well, he was asked to every interment of distinction. He seemed to preserve the list of a whole bead-roll of cousins, merely for the pleasure of being at their funerals, which he was often asked to superintend, and I suspect had sometimes to pay for. He carried me with him as often as he could to these mortuary ceremonies; but feeling I was not, like him, either useful or ornamental, I escaped as often as I could. I saw the poor child's funeral from a distance. Ah, that *Distance!* What a magician for conjuring up scenes of joy or sorrow, smoothing all asperities, reconciling all incongruities, veiling all absurdities, softening every coarseness, doubling every effect by the influence of the imagination. A Scottish wedding should be seen at a distance—the gay band of dancers just distinguished amid the elderly group of the spectators—the glass held high, and the distant cheers as it is swallowed, should be only a sketch, not a finished Dutch picture, when it becomes brutal and boorish. Scotch psalmody, too, should be heard from a distance. The grunt and the snivel, and the whine and the scream, should all be blended in that deep and distant sound, which, rising and falling like the Eolian harp, may have some title to be called the praise of one's Maker.

[1] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 98.

Even so the distant funeral: the few mourners on horseback, with their plaids wrapped around them—the father heading the procession as they enter the river, and pointing out the ford by which his darling is to be carried on the last long road—none of the subordinate figures in discord with the general tone of the incident, but seeming just accessions, and no more;—this *is* affecting.

'*April* 12.—I have finished my task this morning at *half-past eleven*—easily and early—and, I think, not amiss. I hope J. B. will make some great points of admiration!!! —otherwise I shall be disappointed. If this work answers —if it *but* answers, it must set us on our legs; I am sure worse trumpery of mine has had a great run. I remember with what great difficulty I was brought to think myself something better than common, and now I will not in mere faintness of heart give up good hopes.

'*April* 13.—On my return from my walk yesterday, I learnt with great concern the death of my old friend, Sir Alexander Don. He cannot have been above six or seven-and-forty. Without being much together, we had, considering our different habits, lived in much friendship, and I sincerely regret his death. His habits were those of a gay man, much connected with the turf; but he possessed strong natural parts, and in particular few men could speak better in public when he chose. He had tact, with power of sarcasm, and that indescribable something which marks the gentleman. His manners in society were extremely pleasing, and as he had a taste for literature and the fine arts, there were few more agreeable companions, besides being a highly-spirited, steady, and honourable man. His indolence prevented his turning these good parts towards acquiring the distinction he might have attained. He was among the *détenus* whom Buonaparte's iniquitous commands confined so long in France; and coming into possession of a large estate in right of his mother, the heiress of the Glencairn family, he had the means of being very expensive, and probably then acquired

those gay habits which rendered him averse to serious business. Being our member for Roxburghshire, his death will make a stir amongst us. I prophesy Harden *will be here*, to talk about starting his son Henry.—Accordingly the Laird and Lady called. I exhorted him to write instantly. There can be no objection to Henry Scott for birth, fortune, or political principles; and I do not see where we could get a better representative.

'*April* 15.—Received last night letters from Sir John Scott Douglas and Sir William Elliot of Stobbs, both canvassing for the county. Young Harry's the lad for me. Poor Don died of a disease in the heart; the body was opened, which was very right. Odd enough, too, to have a man, probably a friend two days before, slashing at one's heart as it were a bullock's. I had a letter yesterday from John Gibson. The House of Longman and Co. guarantee the sale of Woodstock. Also I made up what was due of my task both for 13th and 14th. So hey for a Swiftianism—

I loll in my chair,
And around me I stare,
With a critical air,
Like a calf at a fair;
And, say I, Mrs. Duty,
Good-morrow to your beauty,
I kiss your sweet shoe-tie,
And hope I can suit ye.

'Fair words butter no parsnips, says Duty; don't keep talking, then, but go to your work again. Here is a day's task before you—the siege of Toulon.—Call you that a task? d— me, I'll write it as fast as Boney carried it on.

'*April* 16.—I am now far ahead with Nap.—Lady Scott seems to make no way. A sad prospect! In the evening a despatch from Lord Melville, written with all the familiarity of former times. I am very glad of it.

Jedburgh, April 17.—Came over to Jedburgh this

morning, to breakfast with my good old friend Mr. Shortreed, and had my usual warm reception. Lord Gillies held the Circuit Court, and there was no criminal trial for any offence whatever. I have attended these circuits with tolerable regularity since 1792, and though there is seldom much of importance to be done, yet I never remember before the Porteous roll being quite blank. The Judge was presented with a pair of white gloves, in consideration of its being a maiden circuit.

'Received £100 from John Lockhart, for review of Pepys; but this is by far too much—£50 is plenty. Still "I must *impeticos the gratillity*" [1] for the present. Wrote a great many letters. Dined with the Judge, where I met the disappointed candidate, Sir J. S. D., who took my excuse like a gentleman.

'*April* 18.—This morning I go down to Kelso to poor Don's funeral. It is, I suppose, forty years since I saw him first. I was staying at Sydenham, a lad of fourteen, or by'r Lady some sixteen; and he, a boy of six or seven, was brought to visit me on a pony, a groom holding the leading rein—and now I, an old grey man, am going to lay him in his grave. Sad work. The very road I go, is a road of grave recollections.

'*Abbotsford, April* 19.—Returned last night from the house of death and mourning to my own, now the habitation of sickness and anxious apprehension. The result cannot yet be judged.—Two melancholy things last night. I left my pallet in our family apartment, to make way for a female attendant, and removed to a dressing-room adjoining, when to return, or whether ever, God only can tell. Also my servant cut my hair, which used to be poor Charlotte's personal task. I hope she will not observe it. The funeral yesterday was very mournful, about fifty persons present, and all seemed affected. The domestics in particular were very much so. Sir Alexander was a kind, though an exact master. It was melancholy to see

[1] Twelfth Night, Act II. Scene 3.

those apartments, where I have so often seen him play the graceful and kind landlord, filled with those who were to carry him to his long home. There was very little talk of the election, at least till the funeral was over.

'*April* 20.—Another death; Thomas Riddell, younger of Camiston, serjeant-major of the Edinburgh Troop in the sunny days of our yeomanry, and a very good fellow.—The day was so tempting that I went out with Tom Purdie to cut some trees, the rather that my task was very well advanced. He led me into the wood, as the blind King of Bohemia was led by his four knights into the thick of the battle at Agincourt or Cressy, and then, like the old king, "I struck good strokes more than one," which is manly exercise.

April 24.—Good news from Brighton. Sophia is confined, and both she and her baby are doing well, and the child's name is announced to be Walter—a favourite name in our family, and I trust of no bad omen. Yet it is no charm for life. Of my father's family, I was the second Walter, if not the third. I am glad the name came my way, for it was borne by my father, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather; also by the grandsire of that last-named venerable person, who was the first laird of Raeburn.—Hurst and Robinson, the Yorkshire tykes, have failed, after all their swaggering. But if Woodstock and Napoleon take with the public, I shall care little about their insolvency; and if they do not, I don't think their solvency would have lasted long. Constable is sorely broken down.

> Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That's sorry yet for thee.

His conduct has not been what I deserved at his hand; but I believe that, walking blindfold himself, he misled me without *malice prepense*. It is best to think so at least, until the contrary be demonstrated. To nourish angry passions against a man whom I really liked, would be to lay a blister on my own heart.

'*April* 27.—This is one of those abominable April mornings which deserve the name of *Sans Culottides*, as being cold, beggarly, coarse, savage, and intrusive. The earth lies an inch deep with snow, to the confusion of the worshippers of Flora. It is as imprudent to attach yourself to flowers in Scotland as to a caged bird; the cat, sooner or later, snaps up the one, and these *Sans Culottides* annihilate the other. It was but yesterday I was admiring the glorious flourish of the pears and apricots, and now hath come the "killing frost." But let it freeze without, we are comfortable within. Lady Scott continues better, and, we may hope, has got the turn of her disease.

'*April* 28.—Beautiful morning, but ice as thick as pasteboard, too surely showing that the night has made good yesterday's threat. Dalgleish, with his most melancholy face, conveys the most doleful tidings from Bogie. But servants are fond of the woeful, it gives such consequence to the person who communicates bad news. Wrote two letters, and read till twelve, and now for a stout walk among the plantations till four.—Found Lady Scott obviously better, I think, than I had left her in the morning. In walking I am like a spavined horse, and heat as I get on. The flourishing plantations around me are a great argument for me to labour hard. "Barbarus has segetes?" I will write my finger-ends off first.

'*April* 29.—I was always afraid, privately, that Woodstock would not stand the test. In that case my fate would have been that of the unfortunate minstrel and trumpeter Maclean at the battle of Sheriffmuir—

> Through misfortune he happened to fa', man,
> But saving his neck
> His trumpet did break,
> And came off without music at a', man.[1]

J. B. corroborated my doubts by his raven-like croaking and criticizing; but the good fellow writes me this morn-

[1] Hogg's Jacobite Relics, vol. ii. p. 5.

ing that he is written down an ass, and that the approbation is unanimous. It is but Edinburgh, to be sure; but Edinburgh has always been a harder critic than London. It is a great mercy, and gives encouragement for future exertion. Having written two leaves this morning, I think I will turn out to my walk, though two hours earlier than usual. Egad, I could not persuade myself that it was such bad *Balaam*,[1] after all.

'*May* 2.—Yesterday was a splendid May-day—to-day seems inclined to be *soft*, as we call it; but *tant mieux*. Yesterday had a twang of frost in it. I must get to work and finish Boaden's Life of Kemble, and Kelly's Reminiscences, for the Quarterly.[2]—I wrote and read for three hours, and then walked, the day being soft and delightful; but, alas, all my walks are lonely from the absence of my poor companion. She does not suffer, thank God — but strength must fail at last. Since Sunday there has been a gradual change—very gradual —but, alas! to the worse. My hopes are almost gone. But I am determined to stand this grief as I have done others.

'*May* 4. — On visiting Lady Scott's sick-room this morning I found her suffering, and I doubt if she knew me. Yet, after breakfast, she seemed serene and composed. The worst is, she will not speak out about the symptoms under which she labours. Sad, sad work. I am under the most melancholy apprehension, for what constitution can hold out under these continued and wasting attacks? My niece, Anne Scott, a prudent, sensible, and kind young woman, arrived to-day, having come down to assist us in our distress from so far as Cheltenham. This is a great consolation.—Henry Scott carries the county without opposition.

[1] *Balaam* is the cant name in a newspaper office for Asinine paragraphs, about monstrous productions of nature and the like, kept standing in type to be used whenever the real news of the day leave an awkward space that must be filled up somehow.

[2] See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx. pp. 152-244.

'*May* 6.—The same scene of hopeless (almost) and unavailing anxiety. Still welcoming me with a smile, and asserting she is better. I fear the disease is too deeply entwined with the principles of life. Still labouring at this Review, without heart or spirits to finish it. I am a tolerable Stoic, but preach to myself in vain.

> Are these things then necessities?
> Then let us meet them like necessities.[1]

'*May* 7.—Hammered on at the Review till my backbone ached. But I believe it was a nervous affection, for a walk cured it. Sir Adam and the Colonel dined here. So I spent the evening as pleasantly as I well could, considering I am so soon to go like a stranger to the town of which I have been so long a citizen, and leave my wife lingering, without prospect of recovery, under the charge of two poor girls. *Talia cogit dura necessitas.*

'*May* 8.—I went over to the election at Jedburgh. There was a numerous meeting; the Whigs, who did not bring ten men to the meeting, of course took the whole matter under their patronage, which was much of a piece with the Blue Bottle drawing the carriage. To see the difference of modern times! We had a good dinner, and excellent wine; and I had ordered my carriage at half-past seven, almost ashamed to start so soon. Everybody dispersed at so early an hour, however, that when Henry had left the chair, there was no carriage for me, and Peter proved his accuracy by showing me it was but a quarter-past seven. In the days that I remember, they would have kept it up till daylight; nor do I think poor Don would have left the chair before midnight. Well, there is a medium. Without being a veteran Vice—a grey Iniquity, like Falstaff, I think an occasional jolly-bout, if not carried to excess, improved society: men were put into good-humour; when the good wine did its good office, the jest, the song, the speech, had double effect;

[1] 2nd King Henry VI. Act III. Scene 1.

men were happy for the night, and better friends ever after, because they had been so.

'*May* 11.—

Der Abschieds Tag est da,
Schwer liegt es auf den Herzen—schwer.[1]

'Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night. Perhaps it was as well. Emotion might have hurt her; and nothing I could have expressed would have been worth the risk. I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant. I have seen plainly, within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless. And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years when so very ill—that I did not, could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided. But in her present lethargic state, what would my attendance have availed—and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with James Ballantyne to-day *en famille*. I cannot help it; but would rather be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me.

'*Edinburgh — Mrs. Brown's Lodgings, North St. David Street — May* 12.—I passed a pleasant day with kind J. B., which was a great relief from the black dog, which would have worried me at home. He was quite alone.

'Well, here I am in Arden. And I may say with Touchstone, "When I was at home I was in a better place";[2] I must, when there is occasion, draw to my

[1] This is the opening couplet of a German trooper's song, alluded to *ante*, vol. i. p. 256. The literal translation is—

The day of departure is come,
Heavy lies it on the hearts—heavy.

[2] As You Like It, Act I. Scene 4.

own Bailie Nicol Jarvie's consolation—"One cannot carry the comforts of the Saut-Market about with one." Were I at ease in mind, I think the body is very well cared for. Only one other lodger in the house, a Mr. Shandy—a clergyman; and, despite his name, said to be a quiet one.

'*May* 13.—The projected measure against the Scottish bank-notes has been abandoned. Malachi might clap his wings upon this, but, alas! domestic anxiety has cut his comb.—I think very lightly in general of praise; it costs men nothing, and is usually only lip-salve. Some praise, however, and from some people, does at once delight and strengthen the mind; and I insert in this place the quotation with which Ld. C. Baron Shepherd concluded a letter concerning me to the Chief Commissioner:—"Magna etiam illa laus, et admirabilis videri solet, tulisse casus sapienter adversos, non fractum esse fortuna, retinuisse in rebus asperis dignitatem."[1] I record these words, not as meriting the high praise they imply, but to remind me that such an opinion being partially entertained of me by a man of a character so eminent, it becomes me to make my conduct approach as much as possible to the standard at which he rates it.—As I must pay some cash in London, I have borrowed from Mr. Alexander Ballantyne the sum of £500. If God should call me before next November, when my note falls due, I request my son Walter will, in reverence to my memory, see that Mr. Alexander Ballantyne does not suffer for having obliged me in a sort of exigency—he cannot afford it, and God has given my son the means to repay him.

'*May* 14.—A fair good-morrow to you, Mr. Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering.—Hogg was here yesterday in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of £100 from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I

[1] Cicero, de Orat. ii. 346.

am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged to borrow myself. But I long ago remonstrated against the transaction at all, and gave him £50 out of my pocket to avoid granting the accommodation, but it did no good.

'*May* 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

'*Abbotsford, May* 16.—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child—the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. "Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place." Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel—sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

'I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not, my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic—but that yellow masque, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she

had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they will be hers yet for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

'*May* 17.—Last night Anne, after conversing with apparent ease, dropped suddenly down as she rose from the supper-table, and lay six or seven minutes, as if dead. Clarkson, however, has no fear of these affections.

'*May* 18.—Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us; the air soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They cannot refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no. She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere—somehow; *where* we cannot tell—*how* we cannot tell; yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation, that necessity which rendered it even a relief, that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself, and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if anything touches me,—the choking sensation. I have been to her room: there was no voice in it—no stirring; the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere; all was neat, as she loved it, but all was calm—calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her:

she raised herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after me, and said, with a sort of smile, "You all have such melancholy faces." These were the last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said; when I returned, immediately departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

'They are arranging the chamber of death—that which was long the apartment of connubial happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a footfall. Oh, my God!

'*May* 19.—Anne, poor love, is ill with her exertions and agitation—cannot walk—and is still hysterical, though less so. I ordered flesh-brush and tepid bath, which I think will bring her about. We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name with our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead, and I think virtuously and wisely. The idea of blotting the names of those who are gone out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest, is one of the rules of ultra-civilisation which, in so many instances, strangle natural feeling by way of avoiding a painful sensation. The Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living members; how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such or such a situation. It is a generous and manly tone of feeling; and so far as it may be adopted without affectation or contradicting the general habits of society, I reckon on observing it.

'*May* 20.—To-night, I trust, will bring Charles or Lockhart, or both; at least I must hear from them. A letter from Violet Lockhart gave us the painful intelligence that she had not mentioned to Sophia the dangerous state in which her mother was. Most kindly meant, but certainly not so well judged. I have always thought that truth, even when painful, is a great duty on such occasions,

and it is seldom that concealment is justifiable. Sophia's baby was christened on Sunday 14th May, at Brighton, by the name of Walter Scott. May God give him life and health to wear it with credit to himself and those belonging to him. Melancholy to think that the next morning after this ceremony deprived him of so near a relation!

'*May* 21.—Our sad preparations for to-morrow continue. A letter from Lockhart; doubtful if Sophia's health will let him be here. If things permit he comes to-night. From Charles not a word; but I think I may expect him. I wish to-morrow were over; not that I fear it, for my nerves are pretty good, but it will be a day of many recollections.

'*May* 22.—Charles arrived last night much affected, of course. Anne had a return of her fainting-fits on seeing him, and again upon seeing Mr. Ramsay,[1] the gentleman who performs the service. I heard him do so with the utmost propriety for my late friend, Lady Alvanley,[2] the arrangement of whose funeral devolved upon me. How little I could guess when, where, and with respect to whom I should next hear those solemn words. Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking about——

'*May* 23.—About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday, Walter arrived, having travelled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow, and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was over-partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort

[1] The Rev. E. B. Ramsay, A.M., St. John's College, Cambridge, —minister of St. John's Chapel, Edinburgh.

[2] Lady Alvanley died at Edinburgh, 17th January 1825—and was buried in the Chapel of Holyrood. See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 220.

of dream before me—the beautiful day, the grey ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking, and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks—the train of carriages—the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which in pleasure-parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so—and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience. Poor Anne has had longer fits since our arrival from Dryburgh than before, but yesterday was the crisis. She desired to hear prayers read by Mr. Ramsay, who performed the duty in the most solemn manner. But her strength could not carry it through. She fainted before the service was concluded.

'*May* 24.—Slept wretchedly, or rather waked wretchedly all night, and was very sick and bilious in consequence, and scarce able to hold up my head with pain. A walk, however, with my sons, did me a deal of good; indeed their society is the greatest support the world can afford me. Their ideas of everything are so just and honourable, kind towards their sisters, and affectionate to me, that I must be grateful to God for sparing them to me, and continue to battle with the world for their sakes, if not for my own.

'*May* 25.—I had sound sleep to-night, and waked with little or nothing of the strange dreamy feeling, which had made me for some days feel like one bewildered in a country where mist or snow has disguised those features of the landscape which are best known to him.—This evening Walter left us, being anxious to return to his wife as well as to his regiment.

'*May* 26.—A rough morning makes me think of St. George's Channel, which Walter must cross to-night or to-morrow to get to Athlone. The wind is almost due

east, however, and the Channel at the narrowest point between Portpatrick and Donaghadee. His absence is a great blank in our circle, especially I think to his Sister Anne, to whom he shows invariably much kindness. But indeed they do so without exception each towards the other; and in weal or woe, have shown themselves a family of love. I will go to town on Monday and resume my labours. Being now of a grave nature, they cannot go against the general temper of my feelings, and in other respects the exertion, as far as I am concerned, will do me good; besides, I must re-establish my fortune for the sake of the children, and of my own character. I have not leisure to indulge the disabling and discouraging thoughts that press on me. Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I not do my best to fight, although oppressed in spirits? and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It shall not, by Heaven! This day and to-morrow I give to the currency of the ideas which have of late occupied my mind, and with Monday they shall be mingled at least with other thoughts and cares.—Last night Charles and I walked late on the terrace at Kaeside, when the clouds seemed accumulating in the wildest masses both on the Eildon Hills and other mountains in the distance. This rough morning reads the riddle. Dull, drooping, cheerless, has this day been. I cared not carrying my own gloom to the girls, and so sate in my own room, dawdling with old papers, which awakened as many stings as if they had been the nest of fifty scorpions. Then the solitude seemed so absolute—my poor Charlotte would have been in the room half a score of times to see if the fire burned, and to ask a hundred kind questions. Well, that is over—and if it cannot be forgotten, must be remembered with patience.

'*May* 27.—A sleepless night. It is true, I should be up and be doing, and a sleepless night sometimes furnishes good ideas. Alas! I have no companion now with whom I can communicate to relieve the loneliness of these watches of the night. But I must not fail myself and my

family—and the necessity of exertion becomes apparent. I must try a *hors d'œuvre*—something that can go on between the necessary intervals of Nap. Mrs. Murray Keith's Tale of the Deserter, with her interview with the lad's mother, may be made most affecting, but will hardly endure much expansion.[1] The framework may be a Highland tour, under the guardianship of the sort of postilion whom Mrs. M. K. described to me—a species of *conducteur* who regulated the motions of his company, made their halts, and was their Cicerone.

'*May* 28.—I wrote a few pages yesterday, and then walked. I believe the description of the old Scottish lady may do, but the change has been unceasingly rung upon Scottish subjects of late, and it strikes me that the introductory matter may be considered as an imitation of Washington Irving—yet not so neither. In short, I will go on. To-day make a dozen of close pages ready, and take J. B.'s advice. I intend the work as an *olla podrida*, into which any odds and ends of narrative or description may be thrown. I wrote easily. I think the exertion has done me good. I slept sound last night, and at waking, as is usual with me, I found I had some clear views and thoughts upon the subject of this trifling work. I wonder if others find so strongly as I do the truth of the Latin proverb, *Aurora musis amica.*

'*Edinburgh, May* 30.—Returned to town last night with Charles. This morning resume ordinary habits of rising early, working in the morning, and attending the Court. All will come easily round. But it is at first as if men looked strange on me, and bite their lip when they wring my hand, and indicated suppressed feelings. It is natural this should be—undoubtedly it has been so with me. Yet it is strange to find one's self resemble a cloud, which darkens gaiety wherever it interposes its chilling shade. Will it be better when, left to my own feelings, I see the whole world pipe and dance around me? I think

[1] The Highland Widow—Waverley Novels, vol. xli.

it will. Their sympathy intrudes on my private affliction. I finished correcting the proofs for the Quarterly; it is but a flimsy article—but then the circumstances were most untoward. This has been a melancholy day—most melancholy. I am afraid poor Charles found me weeping. I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence—a sort of throttling sensation—then succeeded by a state of dreaming stupidity, in which I ask if my poor Charlotte can actually be dead. I think I feel my loss more than at the first blow. Poor Charles wishes to come back to study here when his term ends at Oxford. I can see the motive.

'*May* 31.—The melancholy horrors of yesterday must not return. To encourage that dreamy state of incapacity is to resign all authority over the mind, and I have been used to say

My mind to me a kingdom is.[1]

I am rightful monarch; and, God to aid, I will not be dethroned by any rebellious passion that may rear its standard against me. Such are morning thoughts, strong as carle-hemp—says Burns—

Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk of carle-hemp in man.

Charles went by the steamboat this morning at six. We parted last night mournfully on both sides. Poor boy, this is his first serious sorrow. Wrote this morning a Memorial on the Claim, which Constable's people prefer as to the copyrights of Woodstock and Napoleon. My argument amounts to this, that being no longer accountable as publishers, they cannot claim the character of such, or assert any right arising out of the contracts entered into while they held that capacity.—I also finished a few trifling

[1] 'This excellent philosophical song appears to have been famous in the sixteenth century,' etc.—Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 307.

memoranda on a book called The Omen, at Blackwood's request.'[1]

[1] Since these Memoirs were originally published, the Editor has been favoured with a letter to Miss Edgeworth, which seems too valuable to be omitted. The Mr. Jephson whose death is alluded to, was an intimate friend of the Edgeworthstown family, who made one of the merry party that met Sir Walter under their roof in August 1825—a clergyman of distinguished talents and very elegant manners. A volume of his sermons was, the reader will see, to be published by subscription for the benefit of his widow, who appears to have contemplated setting up a boarding-school in Edinburgh.

'To Miss Edgeworth, etc.

'My dear Miss Edgeworth—I had been long meditating writing you a letter, but probably should have paid it off with thinking about it, like the parrot in the show, had not your kind letter, just received, made it an absolute act of ingratitude to suspend my purpose any longer. Woe's me if any of my friends judge of my regard by my regularity as a correspondent; for, partly having much necessarily to write, partly from the gradual but very sensible failure of my eyes, and partly from a touch of original sin which often prevents me from doing the very thing I ought to do, I have become a very unworthy letter-writer.

'The circumstances which have given you such friendly anxiety, I am not stoic enough to treat with disregard, but it is not my nature to look upon what can't be helped with any anxious or bitter remembrances. My good fortune, so far as wealth is concerned, was exactly like the motions of the Kings of Brentford,

> Ere a pot of good ale you could swallow, (I mean *I*,
> It came with a whoop, and is gone with a hollo. not *you*.)

The fact is, I belong to that set of philosophers who ought to be called Nymmites, after their great founder Corporal Nym, and the fundamental maxim of whose school is, "*things must be as they may*"—and so let that matter rest; things past cure should be past care. I trust I shall do well enough, even if the blackening aspect of affairs in this country should bring on further and more wreckful storms, which is not at present at all unlikely. I had plenty of offers, you may believe, of assistance, and poor Jane proffered her whole fortune as if she had been giving a gooseberry. But what I have done foolishly, I will bear the penance of wisely, and take the whole on my own shoulders. Lady Scott is not a person that cares much about fortune, and as for Beatrice, she amuses herself very well with her altered prospects; for with a sort of high *persiflage* which she never got from me, she has a very generous and independent disposition.

'ABBOTSFORD, 30*th April*.

'This letter was written as far as above, more than two months since; but I have since had great family distress, which, and not the circumstances you allude to, has made me avoid writing, unless where circumstances made it absolutely necessary. Sophia, when expecting soon to be confined, was obliged to go down to Brighton with little Johnnie, whose natural weakness has resolved itself into a complaint in the spine, to cure which the poor child has to lie on his back constantly, and there was the great risk that he might be called for before Sophia's confinement. Then came her being rather prematurely delivered of an infant whose health was at his birth very precarious, although, thank God, he seems now doing well. To complete this scene of domestic distress, is Lady Scott's bad health, which, though better than it was, is still as precarious as possible. The complaint is of water in her chest, and the remedy is foxglove, which seems a cure rather worse than most diseases, yet she sustains both the disease and remedy to the surprise of medical persons. But—I will not write more about it.—As to my pecuniary loss by Constable, it is not worth mentioning, and we have fair prospects that the business may be weathered without much ultimate loss of any kind. The political letters were merely a whim that took about a day each. Of Woodstock, the best I know is that it has been sold for £8400, instead of £3000, which Constable was to have given me. The people are mad, but that in the present circumstances is their affair, and the publishers do not complain.

'I am deeply sorry for Mr. Jephson's sudden death, and feel much interested for his family. I have scarce seen a man I liked so much on short acquaintance, he had so much good sense, accomplishment, and thorough gentlemanlike manners. Depend on it, I will do what I can for the subscription. I think the book should have been twelve shillings, the usual price of an octavo, and it should be printed well and on good paper. I beg you will immediately put down the following names :—

	Copies.
Lady Scott of Abbotsford	2
Miss Scott of Abbotsford	1
Charles Scott, Brazen-Nose College, Oxford	1
John Lockhart, Esq., Pall Mall, London	1
Mrs. Lockhart	1
Hugh Scott, Esq., of Harden	1
Mrs. Scott of Harden	1
	8

	Copies.
	8
Lieut.-Col. Fergusson	1
William Scott, younger of Raeburn	1
Captain Walter Scott of Lochore, King's Hussars	1
Mrs. Scott of Lochore	1
Sir W. Scott	6
	18

These are names which I will be responsible for, and will remit the money when I get to Edinburgh, as despatch in such cases is always useful. I have no doubt I may pick up a score of names more, if you will send me a subscription list.

'In general, I am resolute in subscribing only for myself, because I cannot think of asking my friends to subscribe to the numerous applications which I do not think myself entitled to decline—but this is a very different question.

'I am concerned to say, I do not think there is the most distant probability of success at Edinburgh in the line Mrs. Jephson proposes, though I am happy to think it may answer better in Bath. We are a poor people, and in families of consideration our estates are almost uniformly strictly entailed on heirs-male; therefore the mother has to keep the female chickens under her own wing, and those of good account are generally desirous of bringing them out themselves, and their connexions enable them to do so. Those, again, who are very wealthy, desire sometimes London education for their daughters. In short, there does not exist amongst us the style of young ladies who can give, for such advantages as I am sure Mrs. Jephson would assure them, anything like £200 or £250 a year. Our eldest sons get our estates, our younger become lawyers, go to India, or enter the army; our girls live at home while mamma can keep house on her jointure—get husbands if they can, and if not, do as they can on the interest of £1500 or £2000. The elder brother is in general an honest fellow, but embarrassed with debt; he keeps his sisters in his house if his wife is not cross; and a sort of half family pride, half family affection, carries the thing through. But for paying large pensions, it is not in the nature of things; besides, though a young Englishman or Irishman gets easily into good society in Edinburgh, it is, I think, more difficult for ladies to do so, unless with some strong recommendation—as fortunes, or talents, or accomplishments, or something. In short, I see no hope in that scheme. The melancholy resource of a boarding-school for young ladies might have succeeded, but the rates have been always kept very low at Edinburgh, so as to make it miserable work. My kind love to your brothers and sisters; I hope Mrs. Fox will make you all a lucky present with good fortune to herself.—Walter and Jane have jointly and severally threatened a descent upon Edgeworthstown from Athlone; but they are both really bashful as to doing what they should do, and so Don Whiskerandos and the Lady Tilburina may never accomplish what they themselves consider as grateful and proper.—Kindest regards to Mrs. Edgeworth and Miss Sneyd. Always yours, WALTER SCOTT.

'*2nd May* 1826, ABBOTSFORD.'

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